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THE

Philosophy of Brahmaism

Expounded with reference to its History

Lectures delivered before the Theological Society, Calcutta, in 1906-1907

BY

SITANATH TATTVABHUSHAN,

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PREFACE

To write a somewhat comprehensive treatise on the principles of Theism, one in which the philosophical basis of these principles should be shown with some fulness, and the chief duties of life, the devotional exercises current in the theistic churches of India and the social ideals of the Bráhma Samáj should find an adequate exposition, has been an object of desire and aspiration with the author from his earliest youth. But his life has been a hard struggle throughout—a struggle for very existence—which has left him little time for thought and study, and far less for writing. His earlier tracts and booklets, *Gleams of the New Light*, *The Roots of Faith*, *Whispers from the Inner Life*, *Sádhanbindu* etc., only expressed, without realizing, this desire and aspiration. In his *Brahmajijnásá*, the theistic argument, the proof for the existence and attributes of God, perhaps attained some fulness; but the other principles of religion were left wholly untouched. In his annotations on the *Upanishads* and his Bengali and English translations of them, as well as in his *Hindu Theism* and *Vedánta and its Relation to Modern Thought*, he made a humble attempt to interpret the old Theism of the country and its relation to the present theistic movement. The last-mentioned book, the only one of his works hitherto published that reached any considerable size, was made possible by the generosity of an ardent admirer of the Vedánta, who founded a lectureship in connexion with the

Theological Society. This lectureship, which was kindly offered to the author by the Society, set his leisure free for about a year and enabled him to write out his thoughts on the Vedánta and give them to the public. The same rare opportunity was again given him in 1906 by the Mahárájádhiráj Báhádur of Burdwan, whose kind donation to the same Society enabled them to create another lectureship for the author. The twelve lectures embodied in the present treatise are the fruit of about twelve months' leisure devoted to writing them after the hard daily school work. Written under such disadvantages, they could not but be what they actually are,—only a partial and imperfect realization of the author's life-long aspiration. But even for such as they are, the author scarcely knows how to thank him sufficiently whose kindness and enlightened interest in Theology enabled him to prepare them. To another pious nobleman, the Mahárájá of Pithápuram, the author is indebted for the publication of these lectures. A little book named *The Religion of Brahman or The Creed of Educated Hindus*, which came out in 1906, and which is, in some sense, an introduction to this book, drew the Mahárájá's kindness to the author and his most valued sympathy with his humble literary efforts. The author's gratefulness to this noble patron for the kind interest he takes in his work, and even in the struggles of his private life, is too deep for expression. The author intended to dedicate the book to both the noblemen to whom its preparation and its publication are due. But while the Mahárájádhiráj Báhádur has very kindly given the necessary permission, the Mahárájá says that he has so closely interested himself in the book,—it being printed not only at his expense, but under his kind care,—that he cannot accept its dedication to him. This delicacy on the Mahárájá's part will, no doubt, be appreciated by the reader. The author's obligation to an esteemed brother in faith for what he has done

in helping the publication of this book, is also very great; and he will ever remain grateful to him for his loving services. It is Dewan Bahadur Sir Venkataratnam, ex-Principal, Pithapur Maharaja's College, Cocanada, now Vice-Chancellor, Madras University. He went through the proofs with the greatest care and suggested important alterations here and there.

The author's obligations to the many writers, Indian and Western, whose works have helped him to write this book, are so numerous that he could express them only in the general form in which he has done it in the opening lines of his first lecture. Those who have any familiarity with the authors named and with the minor writers of the schools of thought represented by them, will, however, see that the author of this book, though more or less indebted to all, has not closely followed any of them as regards either the matter or the form of the system, if it deserves the name, herein presented. Readers too fond of classication will no doubt filiate the thought expounded herein to this or that school, but the more careful reader will see that, taken in all its aspects, it refuses any precise classification. For instance, it will be seen that, if the author's metaphysical views, as they find expression specially in his fourth and fifth lectures, ally him to Hegelianism and partly to the school of Sankara, his views on the Future Life and the Divine love clearly distinguish his position from these schools and show his affinity to Rámánuja and Vaishnavism. And, to give another instance, though the author is a staunch supporter of the constitutionalism and advanced social views of the Sádháran Bráhma Samáj, he accepts, nevertheless, it will be seen, the substance of Brahmánanda Kesavchandra Sen's teachings on the New Dispensation. The author indeed is far from being ashamed of belonging to a particular church or even a particular sect.—as little so as of belonging to a particular family; but he hopes he has nevertheless been enabled, in

expounding his views, to preserve, in some degree, that catholic and and cosmopolitan spirit which is an essential characteristic of the religion in which he believes. Praying for the blessing of God on this humble attempt to serve his children and craving the reader's indulgence for its many defects and imperfections, the author sends the book, with great diffidence, to do its appointed work.

In the present edition, besides verbal alterations here and there, the statement of Rájá Rámmohan Ráy's views has been partly re-written and made fuller in the light of friendly criticism offered thereon; the narrative portions, specially the history of Act III of 1872, have been brought up to date, and the appendix has been somewhat enlarged by a short statement of recent philosophical movements in India and England and reference to the author's works published since the first publication of the book.

210-3-2, Cornwallis Street,

CALCUTTA,

September, 1909. (Revised) *September, 1927.*

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LECTURE I

Development of Brahmic Doctrines

Om Bhûr Bhuvah Svah. Tat Savitur varenyam bhargo Devasya dhímahi dhiyo yo nah prachodayát.

On this solemn occasion of the commencement of a series of lectures on the Philosophy of Bráhmaism, let us meditate on the adorable nature of the Supreme Being who guides our thoughts.

Reveal thyself to our souls, O Holy Spirit ; let us see the truth as it is in thee and give such an expression to it as thou canst approve.

Let me also, according to the custom of the country, remember on this occasion the most emi-

nent of those who have helped me in acquiring the little truth about God that I know. I remember and reverently bow down to the Rishis of the *Upanishads*, the first teachers of Theism and the spiritual fathers of all Indian Theists. I then bow down to Ácháryas Śankara and Rámánuja, the chief interpreters of the teachings of the Rishis. I then touch the feet of the three great leaders of the Bráhma Samáj movement, Rájá Rámmohan Ráy, Maharshi Devendranáth Thákur and Brahmánanda Kesavchandra Sen, through whom have mainly come the grace and power that Bráhmaism now possesses. Lastly, I humble myself with grateful reverence to Dr. James Martineau, the English Theist who presented to me, in its clearest form, the relation of Theism to the scientific thought of the age, and to Professor T. H. Green, the English Idealist, who first introduced me to the higher Metaphysics of the West.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bráhmaism, in all stages of its history, presents itself to us in three aspects,—(1) as a creed, (2) as a system of *sádhan* or spiritual culture, and (3) as a scheme of social reform. In tracing the development of Bráhmic doctrines in the present lecture and in seeking a philosophical basis for Bráhmaism throughout the whole series of these lectures, I shall endeavour not to lose sight of any of these three aspects of Bráhmaism. In fact they are inseparable from one another. A creed, a doctrine of God and

his relation to man and of man's duty to God and his fellow-men, cannot but lead to a theory of the ways and means of discharging these duties and a conception of social life consistent with their due performance. A creed, again, appears to us in two forms,—(1) as a body of particular beliefs, and (2) as a theory of the source or basis of these beliefs. In estimating the value of a creed, neither of these two forms in which it presents itself should be overlooked; and it will be my endeavour, in noticing every stage of the history of Bráhmaism, to keep this truth constantly in view. The system of *sádhan* and the conception of social life associated with a creed are also always found backed by an appeal to some authority, external or internal,—supported by a statement of reasons, good or bad, in their favour; and it will be my endeavour, in these lectures, to take a clear view of such statements of reason in support of every scheme of practical life of which I shall take notice. I need say only one word more in introduction before I proceed to trace my proposed development of Bráhmic doctrines. The Theological Society, in connection with which these lectures are going to be delivered, is an institution affiliated to the Sádháran Bráhma Samáj, and the *Mandir* in which I happen to be lecturing belongs to that Samáj. This may lead some who are unacquainted with the constitution of the Samáj to think—it does not seem likely that any member of the Samáj is capable of making the mistake—that

my view of the history of Bráhmic doctrines or my conception of the philosophy of Bráhmaism is the one with which the Samáj as a body is identified. Nor would this be true of any other individual connected with the Samáj. The Samáj, as a body, is not identified with any particular views except the simple creed to which every one wishing to be its member is required to subscribe. There are, indeed, opinions and systems of opinions on philosophical, historical and other matters current in the Samáj, but these opinions are the opinions of particular individuals or large or small bodies of individuals in the society. Some of these are perhaps the opinions of the great majority of the members; but even this fact does not make them the opinions of the Samáj; for the Samáj does not lend its authority to any but those it has fixed as its fundamental principles. Other principles and different interpretations of the fundamental principles it simply tolerates and leaves to be accepted or rejected according to their intrinsic reasonableness or the reverse or according to the varying idiosyncrasies of its members. The great variety of conceptions of Bráhmaism underlying the common and fundamental creed of the Bráhma Samáj will be somewhat evident from the brief history of Bráhmic doctrines that I proceed to sketch.

At the time of Rájá Rámmohan Ráy and long after that time, the term 'Bráhmaism' or 'Bráhma Dharma,' as the name of the religion of the Bráhma

Samáj, was unknown. The religion of the Samáj was, during this period of its history, identified with Vedantism or the religion of the *Upanishads* and the *Brahma Sútras*. When and for what reason these latter names gave place to 'Bráhmaism' and 'Bráhma Dharma,' we shall see as we proceed. Rámmohan Ráy represented the religion of the Bráhma Samáj as Vedantism of the scholastic age, specially as Vedantism interpreted by Śankara. He believed or wished it to be believed that the *Upanishads* were the authoritative expositions of Theistic doctrine and worship. In the prefaces to his edition of the *Upanishads* and in his controversies with the advocates of idolatry and popular Christianity, he nowhere questions the authority of these ancient writings or sets up Reason or Intuition as an independent authority competent to sit in judgment on the accepted scriptures of the nation. Next to the authority of the *Upanishads* is, to the Rájá, the authority of Śankara, their commentator. It is mainly in the light of Śankara's commentary that the Rájá interprets the *Upanishads* and the Vedantic aphorisms. He may, here and there, suggest interpretations of Vedantic doctrines not to be found in Śankara; but he never sets himself against his system as a whole. I have, therefore, no hesitation in characterising the Rájá's creed, as it is presented in his writings mentioned above, as scholastic or mediæval Vedantism. I call it 'scholastic' or 'mediæval' in order to differentiate it from an earlier, and, as I think, a

more rational Vedantism, the religion of the composers of the *Upanishads*, to whom there were no authoritative scriptures,—no higher authority than their own intuitions and reasonings. It is, indeed, difficult to ascertain how or whether the author of the youthful production, *Tuhfatul Muvāhidín*, was, in his mature years, converted into that unquestioning acceptor of authoritative scriptures whom we meet with in the writings mentioned. But if we are to judge of the Rájá's views by the productions of his mature age and not of his unripe youth, and by his public utterances and not by what one may only guess him to have thought, then no other characterisation of his creed is possible than what I have given above, namely, that he was a scholastic, mediæval or Śankarite Vedantist. His system of *sádhan* or spiritual culture is also, as might be expected, modelled after that of the Śankarite Vedanta. According to him, our inferential knowledge of God reveals him to be the Creator and Preserver of the world and as the object of our worship. This worship is necessarily dualistic, the worshipper and the worshipped appearing in it as different from each other. It consists in meditating on the attributes of God with the help of the *Gáyatrí* and of texts from the *Upanishads*. It also comprises adoration and prayer, such as we find in the well-known *stotra* from the *Mahánirvána Tantra*. But this form of worship does not enable us to know the real essence of the Supreme Being. That can be known only by the

higher form of worship, *samádhi* or *aparokshánubhúti*, the direct perception of God, in which he is revealed as our very Self, as the only Reality without a second. As to domestic and social duties, the Rájá insists, in the spirit of the *Bhagavadgítá*, upon their due performance, and he sums up all social duties under the all-comprehensive principle of *loka-s'reyah* or philanthropy. The only thing in which the Rájá differs from Śankara,—not in letter but in spirit,—is in lending the whole weight of his teaching not to monasticism, as Śankara does, but to the life of the house-holder. In this he agrees more with the earlier Vedantists like Janaka and Yájnavalkya than with the great anchorite and his followers. But in insisting that the *Brahmajnání* or Theist should be, as a rule, a house-holder, the Rájá also insisted that in performing domestic and social duties one should follow the *sástras*, the *smritis*, and not one's personal whims and inclinations. He indeed advocated some social reforms and spoke against caste in the spirit of Mrityunjayácharya, whose treatise against the caste system, *Bajrasúchi*, he published in part with a Bengali translation. But it does not appear from his writings that he desired anything more than the removal of the evil customs that had grown in later ages and a return of Hindu society to the somewhat purer state that existed in the later Vedic period. That he contemplated any radical reconstruction of society, seems improbable from his teachings and from the solicitude which he showed,

up to the close of his life, not to be excommunicated from the pale of Hindu orthodoxy. However, in the Raja's Christian writings we find a view of Theism very different from the one we have just given. He there appears as a Unitarian Christian accepting the authority of the Bible, specially of the teachings of Jesus Christ. This seems to show that the Raja's real creed was neither orthodox Vedantism nor Biblical Christianity, but that in his controversies with Hindu idolators and Christian Trinitarians he simply assumed the authority of the Hindu and the Christian scriptures and showed that they inculcated the spiritual worship of one God, the truth for the establishment of which the Raja lived and died.

I proceed now to notice the form or rather forms of Bráhmaism introduced by our next great leader, Maharshi Devendranáth Thákur. A striking difference between our founder and our next two leaders is that while the former came to his work as a formed and mature thinker, the two latter joined the Samáj in their early youth, and that while there are scarcely any data for tracing the growth of the former's mind, the two latter may almost be said to have thought aloud. We can see the workings of their mind,—the truths they gradually acquired, the mistakes they made and the changes they underwent—both from their work and from what they have told us about themselves in their autobiographical sketches. Thus, for instance, while we cannot say by what steps the Rájá came to occupy the standpoint as regards the higher Hindu and the

Christian scriptures in which we find him in his writings, as to the Maharshi we know the time when he had no acquaintance with these scriptures, the time when he had studied them only superficially and was carried away by what seemed to him their excellences, and again the time when, having studied them thoroughly, he discovered what seemed to him grave defects in them and checked and modified his admiration for them. We find, in his own history and the history of the Bráhma Samáj contemporaneous with his, how the Samáj itself changed with his personal changes. We must notice some of these changes in order to understand the Bráhmaism represented by him. It is evident from the Maharshi's Autobiography that his belief in Theism preceded his study of the Hindu scriptures and his acquaintance with the Rájá's works. It was his own intuitions and reflections that revealed God to him. The English education which he had received must have had its due influence on his mind, but as to the particular authors, if any, who influenced his thought, we know nothing. He seems to have already formed a clear conception of man's relation to God and God's attributes at the time he came across the *Upanishads*; for it was their confirmation of his cherished convictions that, as he tells us, overjoyed him at this stage of his life. When this was so, it is somewhat unintelligible how, throughout a definite period of his life, he accepted these writings as the authoritative basis of religious faith and how, when his faith in them as such was shaken by the

discovery of errors in them, he felt quite at sea as to the grounds of Bráhmic faith. Again, it seems to me rather strange that, though he had, as he tells us, gone through the eleven principal *Upanishads* before the return of the four pandits from Benares, he had not yet discovered in them those objectionable features which latterly struck him and the discovery of which led him to reject the authority of the *Upanishads*. The features spoken of, specially the doctrine of the unity of the Divine and the human spirit, are nowhere absent in the *Upanishads*, and in the *Chhándogya* and the *Brihadáranyaka*, they are most prominent, the former repeating the monistic *Mahávákya*, '*Tat tvam asi*' ('Thou art that') not fewer than seven times in the same chapter. I cannot, therefore, resist the conclusion that during the period in which the Maharshi believed and taught the doctrine that the *Upanishads* were the authoritative basis of the religion of the Bráhma Samàj, his study of these writings was most superficial and perhaps even desultory—confined to portions selected by his teachers. However, it was during this period of his belief in the Vedánta as the basis of Bráhmaism that the Maharshi took an important step—the first step towards changing the Bráhma Samáj from a mere Prayer Meeting into a Church and a Society. He established what he himself calls in his Autobiography the Brahmic Covenant, but what others have more correctly called the Vedantic Covenant, for when it was established, the authority of the Vedanta had not been rejected and the term 'Bráhmaism' or

'Bráhma Dharma' had not come into use. Babu Rájnárayan Vasu said in an article in the monthly journal *Dásí* (now defunct), that where 'Bráhma Dharma' stands now, there stood then the phrase "*Vedánta-pratipádya satya dharma*" (the true religion taught by the Vedánta). The Maharshi's religion, then, in this period of his life, was, as appears from what followed later on, Dualistic Theism, coupled with the belief that the *Upanishads* taught this form of Theism and were the authoritative basis of theistic belief and worship. Really, as I have already said, it was Intuition and Reason that lay at the basis of his Theism, but either from an absence in him of the power of close introspection or from a feeling of modesty and diffidence arising from his youth, added to an imperfect acquaintance with what the *Upanishads* really taught, he did not see and did not declare the real basis of his faith. The change, the discovery of the real basis of his faith, came, however, when the return of the four Vedic students from Benares afforded him an opportunity for a thorough study of the *Upanishads* and the earlier portions of the Vedas. But the negative discovery that the *Upanishads* were not the real basis of Bráhmic faith was not immediately followed by the positive discovery of the real basis. A period of suspense and uncertainty intervened. And then it was found out that the true basis of Bráhmaism was Intuition, a real or supposed power of the mind to know directly the fundamental principles of religion,—

God, Immortality and Duty. What the doctrine of Intuition, as taught by the Maharshi and the Brahmánanda is, and how far, if at all, it is true, I shall discuss later on. Here I must add a few remarks to those I have already made as regards the rejection of the *Upanishads* as the basis of Bráhmaism. It seems to me that even when the fallibility of the *Upanishads* had been found out, they might yet continue to be regarded as, in a sense, the basis of Bráhmaism,—in the sense of Bráhmic literature,—more or less imperfect statements of the Bráhmic faith. The works of the Maharshi are, we know, fallible, containing what we consider to be errors here and there. Does this fact deprive them of the right of being regarded as Bráhmic literature, as more or less imperfect and tentative statements of Bràhmic principles? The basis of a religion may either be philosophical or historical. No books as such can be the philosophical basis of a religion. But any book containing statements of the fundamental principles of the religion may be called its basis in a historical sense. I therefore hold that the *Upanishads*, though they contain some errors, are, in as much as they are statements of the fundamental principles of Bràhmaism, Bráhmic literature or the historical basis of Bráhmaism in the same sense as the works of the Rájá, the Brahmánanda and the later exponents of Bráhmaism are so, making due allowance, of course, for the change of thought

effected by the progress of scientific knowledge. I believe that the ancient Hindu Theists and even several mediæval followers of the Vedanta looked upon the scriptures as authoritative works in no other sense than this. But the Maharshi did not see all this. His view of scriptural authority was influenced by the idea, more Christian than Hindu, that a scripture, to be real scripture, must be infallible. So, as soon as the fallibility of the *Upanishads* was discovered by him, they ceased to be scriptures for his ideal church. But, though discarding the *Upanishads* as scriptures, he could not altogether dismiss from his mind the idea that an authoritative scripture is needed as a guide and basis of unity for a church. He could not, it seems, fully trust that the inner light that had revealed the truth to him and revealed also the fallibility of the *Upanishads*, would be a safe guide for the church. He, therefore, proceeded to supply the place vacated by the *Upanishads*, and he did so by his annotated selections from the *Upanishads* and the *Smritis*, entitled '*Bráhma Dharma.*' Those who carefully read what he says on the claims of this book on the reverence of Bráhmas, can scarcely doubt that in his estimation it is a virtually infallible scripture for Bráhmas. However, I shall leave this part of my subject with only one more remark on the discarding of the *Upanishads* as the historical basis of the Bráhmaism. Perhaps the Maharshi thought, as others have thought after him, that the *Upanishads* contained not only errors, but fundamental errors,—

that such doctrines as the unity of God and man, *nirvána-mukti* and re-incarnation were opposed to the fundamental principles of Bráhmaism as conceived by him, and that, therefore, they could not be accepted by him as the basis of Bráhmaism even in a historical sense. If so, I have nothing more to say than that those who think so have no right to call their religion Hinduism in any but a most superficial sense.

However, as already mentioned, the Maharshi's faith now changed into Intuitional Dualistic Theism, represented in substance by the *Bráhma Dharma Bíja*, which he now drew up as the basis of unity for Bráhmas. He had already remodelled, according to his own idea of Bráhmaism, the form of worship introduced by Rájá Rámmohan Ráy. He had purged the *stotra* from the *Mahánirvána Tantra* of its monistic elements and enriched the liturgy by successive additions of texts from the *Upanishads* and the *Sanhitás* till it took its present form. This liturgy, though it is not used by the Progressive sections of the Bráhma Samáj, is really the basis of their forms of worship. The combination of texts showing the attributes of God was specially a most important step, leading to great developments in the devotional life of the Bráhma Samáj. In the Ádi Bráhma Samáj liturgy, indeed, these texts are left with only a very scanty exposition. But the Maharshi, both by his own intensely meditative habits and his rich expositions of these texts in his discourses, taught the Bráhmas how to use them in private devotions and also how a

more living form of public worship than the Ádi Samáj one could be developed from it. For any regular system of spiritual culture, however, we seek in vain in the Maharshi's writings and discourses and I have always felt an unsatisfied curiosity about the methods and disciplines by which that great soul rose to that dizzy height of communion with the Supreme Spirit which appears dimly, though unmistakably, even to our unenlightened eyes, in his invaluable utterances.

Reserving for a subsequent part of this lecture a detailed notice of the Philosophy of Intuition which the Maharshi, in close association with Brahmánanda Kesavchandra Sen, gave to the Bráhma Samáj, I now come to notice his scheme of social reform. The country will ever remain deeply grateful to him for conceiving and carrying into practice the idea that a Theist cannot, without morally degrading himself, practise idolatry or any other ceremonial worship of gods and goddesses. The association of the most refined form of Theism with the grossest forms of polytheism and idolatry had gone on in the country for centuries. It was reserved for the second great leader of the Bráhma Samáj to sever this unholy connection, to arouse the dormant conscience of the country and lay the foundation of a reformed, unidolatrous Hindu community. It was the Maharshi who performed the first two Bráhmic *Anusthâns* or domestic rites ever celebrated in the country and thereby became the progenitor of generations of truly Theistic reformers. He

banished polytheism and idolatry once for all from the reformed society he thus founded. And he proceeded farther. As soon as he felt—though the inspiration in this case came from another source—that a Bráhma, a disbeliever in caste, should not wear any badge of caste, he threw away his sacrificial thread and never again wore it himself. He had already given up caste-restrictions as to eating and drinking, freely eating and drinking with non-Bráhmanas in public dinners. It now seemed as if he was going to abolish caste altogether, in all its varied forms, from his society. Besides discarding his own thread and discontinuing giving threads to the other members of his family when going through the ceremony of *upanayan* or presentation to a spiritual teacher, he went so far with the younger and more ardent spirits of his church—from whom the inspiration in this matter really came—as to appoint a non-Bráhmana in the person of the Brahmánanda to the ministry of the Samáj and to dismiss Bráhmanas wearing threads from the ministry, thereby declaring that those who supported caste in any shape fell short of the true ideal of Bráhmaship and were unfit for the Bráhma Samáj ministry. But the fact is, as was proved by subsequent events, that in this matter of abolishing caste the Maharshi had overstepped the real growth of his mind, and the consequence was that he receded. It does not fall within the scope of this lecture to tell the history of this recession. All the steps of this backsliding,—the reinstatement of the dismissed thread-wearing Bráhmanas to the Samáj ministry, the accept-

ance of the resignation of the ministers belonging to the reform party, the non appointment of any other non-Bráhmana to the Ádi Samáj ministry, the re-introduction of the thread into the *upanayan* ceremony, the interdiction of inter-caste marriages in the Ádi Bráhma Samáj,—all these go to prove that the Maharshi never really outgrew the caste notions, at any rate the caste feeling, prevalent in the country, and that, in common with the caste-ridden Theists of mediæval times, he believed the Bráhmanas to be a privileged community whose sanctity should not be desecrated by marital unions with other castes, or even by partnership in the ministry of religion with non-Bráhmanas. But it must be noticed that the Maharshi has never put forward any public defence, oral or written, of his opinion on this subject. On the contrary, the rather awkward manner in which he has dealt with thorough-going reformers in this matter has seemed to show as if he was half-ashamed of his back-sliding and was conscious that he was going against a strong and irresistible tide of progress. It must also be mentioned in justice to him that he has shown himself in favour of the re union of the various sub-divisions of the Bráhmana caste. He has contracted marriage relations in his family not only with high-class Bráhmanas of other sub-divisions than his own, but even with those who are called Varna-Bráhmanas, the priests of the lower classes, a reform which seems in one respect to be even more radical than the marriage of high-caste Bráhmanas and high-caste non-Bráhmanas.

I now come to the time of our third great leader, Brahmánanda Kesavchandra Sen. His mental history agrees with the Maharshi's in respect of being characterised by great changes,—even greater and more frequent changes than those experienced by the latter,—and in that of his coming to his theistic faith by the help of his own intuitions and reflections; but he was fortunate in arriving directly at the Intuitional Dualistic Theism which he held in common with the Maharshi in his early life without going through the semi-Vedantic stage of the latter's history. When Kesav joined the Bráhma Samáj, the second and final form of the Maharshi's creed had been already formulated, and the former only helped in developing the philosophy of Intuition, the substance of which the Maharshi had already conceived. The writers of the Brahmánanda's Bengali biography claim that he made a substantial addition to the Maharshi's theory of Intuition. The latter had taught that a belief in God and other fundamental religious truths is due to *Átmapratyaya* or Intuition. The Brahmánanda added, "Yes, we really do so, but before believing in them through Intuition we know them through Common Sense or *Sahaj Jnán*, our innate power of knowing things, both earthly and heavenly, without the intervention of reasoning." The writers of the book named assert that the Maharshi accepted this addition to his philosophy and accordingly changed his previous statement of the doctrine in the

Bráhma Dharma Grantha. They prove this by comparing the edition of the book published before Kesav's joining the Bráhma Samáj with another published after he had joined it. I need not and do not question the claim put forward in favour of the Brahmánanda by his biographers. What I wish to point out is that his amendment of the theory does not *substantially* add to it. The only change is that while in the first form Intuition used to be called *pratyaya*, belief, in the second form it came to be called *jnán*, knowledge. Knowledge is indeed higher than belief; but a phenomenon claiming to be knowledge, and not mere belief, can be aceepted as knowledge only if it can stand the tests of true knowledge. Now, as to the question of tests, the theory of Intuition or Common Sense in both the forms mentioned above stands on the same footing. Both the forms have the same strength or the same weakness, by whatever name we may call their common characteristic. That common characteristic is that intuitive truths or the principles of common sense are claimed to be universal and irresistible, but their universality and irresistibility are not shown by any philosophical analysis of knowledge, such as the students of higher Metaphysics are familiar with. When the universality and irresistibility of the higher truths of religion are denied by large numbers of both sceptics and believers, they can be placed on a sound basis only, if at all, by such close and searching analysis. But neither Maharshi nor Brahmánanda displayed any great power of philoso-

phical analysis even in their best days. Bábus Rájnaráyan Vasu and Dvijendranáth Thákur showed somewhat better powers of analysis in their writings; but their philosophical writings seem to have made very little impression on the members of the Bráhma Samáj. Their theories of Intuition being substantially at one with the theory of the two great leaders, their special contributions to the philosophy of Intuition were not much attended to. However, I purpose to do greater justice to them than is implied in this bare mention of their work, in a subsequent lecture, in which the theory of Intuition will be made the subject of more detailed exposition and examination than is possible here. Suffice it to say here, that the theory of Intuition, as taught by these four Bráhma thinkers, received no embellishment or development at the hands of subsequent writers, even of such an able writer as the Reverend Bábu Pratápchandra Mazumdár, till it was materially changed, changed almost to non-recognition, by writers belonging to the Sádháran Bráhma Samáj. Before, however, I leave this stage of Kesav's theology, I may as well point out his intellectual affinity with some of the schools of European philosophy. For all that he wrote and spoke about this time on the philosophical basis of religion, he seems to have been mostly indebted to Reid and Hamilton, the most prominent writers of what is called the Scotch School of Philosophy. He was also an admirer of Victor Cousin, the French philosopher. Of Hamilton he

spoke as "that unrivalled thinker." This seems rather strange, as Hamilton is really the father of modern English Agnosticism. I cannot resist the conclusion that the Brahmánanda was not a thorough student of Hamilton. He seems to have been captivated by the philosopher's theory of perception, according to which we have a direct, presentative knowledge of Reality. This theory, however, is of no use to religion; but the Brahmánadá seems to have conceived his theory of man's direct knowledge of God somewhat after its fashion. But nothing likely to satisfy a soul hankering after philosophical truth—nothing capable of standing a searching criticism, was ever attempted either by the Brahmánanda or his immediate predecessors or immediate successors. And it may be added that neither his nor their proper work suffered anything for not attempting that task. They lived in what may be called the childhood of the Bráhma Samáj. It was the age, not of philoso phical doubt and criticism, but of easy, trustful faith and spiritual hankering. The critical spirit was awakened, just enough to question the authority of accredited scriptures and prophets; and by showing that the acceptance of scriptures and prophets as from God implied a previous knowledge of the first principles of religion, and that this knowledge could not but be direct, untaught by man—the thinkers of the period gave spiritually-disposed people a resting place in natural religion—a religion based on natural revelation. People gladly accepted the idea of such

a revelation, though they did not trouble themselves about its precise nature and contents.

I now invite your attention to the second stage of the Brahmánanda's theology, the stage occupied by the years immediately following his separation from the Ádi Bráhma Samaj and immediately preceding the declaration of the New Dispensation. In this period he formulated a number of doctrines which differentiated more and more, as time passed, his Bráhmaism from the simple Bráhmaism of the Ádi Bráhma Samaj and which still continue to divide the Bráhma Samáj into two bodies of believers, to whichever section of the Samáj they may belong—to divide them into those who still stick to the simple creed of the Ádi Bráhma Samáj and those who accept, under various forms it may be, the Brahmánanda's more elaborate creed. These doctrines are those of Great Men, Inspiration, Special Dispensation, *Yoga*, *Bhakti and Vairágya.* To briefly define these doctrines, the theory of Great Men teaches that there are some men, such as Buddha, Christ, Muhammad, Chaitanya, etc., whose lives and teachings are special revelations from God and should be made the subject of special study and *sádhan.* The doctrine of Inspiration teaches that, besides God's general revelation of truth through our Intuition and Reason, he reveals his will to us on special occasions and in a special manner. According to the doctrine of Special Dispensation, the chief systems of historical religion are due to direct Divine agency, which works through chosen

bodies of men claiming special reverence from us. *Yoga* means direct communion with God,—seeing, hearing and touching him with our souls and living in constant union with him. *Bhakti* means rapt and fervent love of God, leading the devotee to such manifestations of feeling as laughing, crying and dancing, and to humbling himself to all lovers of God. *Vairágya* means absence of attachment to earthly things and living a simple and ascetic life. These doctrines aroused great opposition among the adherents of the Ádi Bráhma Samáj and also among a large body of men who belonged to Kesav's own church, the Bráhma Samáj of India. There is, indeed, a rational interpretation of these doctrines which might be made acceptable to these oppositionists, and it may be said that some of Kesav's opponents recognised the underlying truth of the doctrines. But the form in which he taught them, or, at any rate, the way in which his opponents understood him, made opposition on their part inevitable. In the first stage of his public life, Kesav had, to a certain extent, appealed to the intellect of his auditors,—had taken some care to convince them. But in his second stage, he grew more and more dogmatic and prophetic as years passed on and failed to reach the intellect of the more critical even among his own friends and followers. It happened, therefore, that, even before the Kuchbehar Marriage, a tolerably large body of Bráhmas had been formed in the Bráhma Samáj of India for whom his leadership had more or

less come to an end. Those who have closely studied the history of the Bráhma Samáj know that this fact made the establishment of the Sádháran Bráhma Samáj much easier than it would have been otherwise.

However, I now come to the third and last stage of Kesav's theological development, the stage represented by the formulation of the New Dispensation. By the "New Dispensation' I understand him to mean the doctrines I have just noticed, besides a number of rites and ceremonies introduced by him with the purpose of assimilating the truths of previous dispensations, *i.e*, the principal systems of religion chronologically preceding the advent of Bráhmaism. Necessarily, Kesav being the first preacher of the system, he is the central figure in it, and the system is more or less identified with his teachings. This is what repels many Bráhmas from the system. They are opposed to all special personal influence in religion. But apart from the truth or error of the doctrine, I do not see anything repugnant or opposed to the spirit of Bráhmaism in the idea of a particular form of it being identified with a particular individual. If that particular individual is set up as an authority to be blindly followed, as one to whom private judgment is to be sacrificed, then, indeed, is such teaching to be pronounced as quite opposed to the spirit of Bráhmaism. But though the Brahmánanda has done much, I admit, to foster blind belief and discourage free thought, and though isolated expres-

-sions might be quoted from his utterances to the effect that he should be blindly followed, I do not think he made any systematic attempt to get recognised as a prophet to be blindly followed. Though he did not reason out his system, he may be supposed to have commended it to the free judgment of the public and left it to be accepted or rejected according to its inherent reasonableness or unreasonableness. If, therefore, the New Dispensation commends itself to the spiritual instincts or the intellect of some Bráhmas, even though it is not a reasoned-out system, I do not see that its followers can reasonably be set down as a body of blind believers in a prophet or a system of teachings any more than the followers of any scientific or philosophical system accepted in the same way. What I object to as a fundamental error and as opposed to the spirit of Bráhmaism, is the presentation of any form of it in an unreasoned dogmatic fashion; and of this, Bráhmas who are not New Dispensationists are as much guilty as those who are. This way of preaching Bráhmaism fosters blind belief and checks the growth of free thought indifferently, whether the system preached be the New Dispensation or any other form of Bráhmaism. Undue personal influence, such as coerces the intellect of those subject to it, whether that influence comes from Kesavchandra Sen or any other Bráhma leader or teacher, is undoubtedly exerted and perpetuated by such preaching, even though the personal nature of the influence may not be recognised or admitted.

And the extent and the harmfulness of this influence are proportionate to the power and ability of the person from whom it emanates. It has often seemed to me that the reason why Bráhmas outside the pale of the New dispensation are less exposed to the evil effects of such undue personal influence, is not that the teachers of the New Dispensation are appreciably more dogmatic than some of the teachers of other forms of Bráhmaism, but that after Kesavchandra Sen we have not had any Bráhma leader of towering genius, such a one as can exert any very deep influence on his brethren. Let but such a leader arise, and I have little doubt that he will be as blindly followed by many as Kesav is supposed to be followed by the New Dispensationists. The safe-guard against the evil complained of is not to check the growth of personal influence, which, if exerted in the proper way, is a healthy factor in the growth of religious life,—or to perfect our constitutional system, which, however good and necessary it may be, cannot arrest the growth of personal influence and should not be allowed to check it, even if it could; but to change the prevalent mode of preaching Bráhmaism,—to change it from its present dogmatic form to a rational one, to appeal, not to blind unreasoning faith after the fashion of the old systems which we profess to have outgrown, nor to traditional beliefs received without examination and criticism and hiding their true nature under the imposing name of "Intuitions," but to universal Reason, to the scientific faculty, which receives nothing, even though it be a

fundamental truth, without examination and criticism and to Philosophy, which, as the unifier of all sciences, as the embodiment of the fundamental principles of all knowledge and belief, is the only final authority on religious as well as other matters. It will be seen from what yet remains to be said of the later development of Bráhmic doctrines, how the Bráhma Samaj is slowly moving towards the goal I am pointing to. However, after what may seem to be a little digression, but which I have purposely interposed, I return to the notice of Kesav's last stage of doctrinal development, and have to add, to what I have already said, that his early philosophical Dualism was greatly modified in his latter days, so much so that in his "*Brahmagitopanishad*" and "*Yoga, objective and subjective,*" he recognises, in a manner, the essential unity of the divine and the human spirit, and in one of his sermons comprised in the volumes entitled "*Sevaker Nivedan,*" he sees a meaning, which to me seems the true meaning, of the Vedantic doctrine of *nirvána mukti*, at which the Maharshi had shuddered and which he had rejected as un Bráhmic. The Brahmánanda recognises that there is a stage of spiritual development at which the human soul really sees itself spiritually, not naturally, merged in the Supreme Soul and becomes one with it. This pro-Vedantic tendency culminated in a declaration in the *Liberal* newspaper of the 7th June, 1885, shortly after Kesav's death and, therefore, presumably made in the spirit of his teachings,—a declaration which runs thus:—"Our Return to the Vedanta: we need not say

very much upon our Return to the Vedanta. This is a known fact. The foundation of Bráhmaism was laid upon the *Upanishads*. Although we have advanced, the foundation remains the same." However, though Kesav's early Dualism was thus modified, his Intuitionism showed no sign of modification; and with the exception of Pandit Kálisankar Kavirája's *Bráhma Dharma Vijnána Bíja*, which deserves only a bare mention, his church made no later contribution to the philosophy of Bráhmaism. The writings of such eminent scholars as Pandit Gaurgovinda Ráy Upádhyáya and Maulavi Girishchandra Sen have, indeed, done valuable service in bringing the Hindu and the Muhammadan scriptures within the comprehension of educated Bengalis, but they have made no substantial contribution to laying the philosophical foundation of Bráhmaism.

However, coming now to the Brahmánanda's contribution to the Bráhma mode of *sádhan* or spiritual culture, we find him, unlike the Maharshi, to have left an elaborate system of such *sádhan* in the two books by him I have already named and in his *Bráhma Dharmer Anusthán*, his utterances, with the utterances of other leading Bráhmas, in the three volumes of *Dharma-sádhan*, and in his sermons from the Brahma Mandir pulpit. As this system must occupy us at some length in future lectures of the present series, I must pass by it with only one remark on what seems to me Kesav's most important contribution to Bráhma *sádhan*, our present form of worship,—the form

which is, with minor variations, used in the public services of both the Bháratvarshíya and the Sádháran Bráhma Samáj and also by many Bráhmas in their private devotions. The good which this form of worship,—comprising what may be called the three fundamental movements of the soul towards God, namely, *árádhana*, adoration, *dhyán*, direct communion, and *prárthaná*, prayer,—has done to the spiritual life of the Bráhma Samáj, seems to me incalculable.

I now come to the Brahmánanda's scheme of social reform; and under this head I shall briefly notice four points. First, his entire abolition of caste. The scheme which he and his friends formulated in his Ádi Samáj days, the one which the Maharshi at first sympathised with and then receded from, was adhered to and consistently worked out in his latter days. With all the conservatism of which his advanced followers complained, Kesav never showed any tendency to come to any sort of compromise with caste. What may be, from one standpoint, called the most conservative act of his life, the Kuchbehar Marriage, was, from another point of view, a reform of a most radical nature. It was an inter-caste and inter-tribal marriage. So, under the influence of his universalising teachings, which really changed the Bráhma Samáj from a priest-ridden Hindu sect to a broad and free society with the spirit of primitive and higher Hinduism pervading it, but not the trammels of mediæval and later Hinduism checking and arresting its growing life, caste distinctions flew away before the Bráhma

reformers, and the Bráhma Samáj was filled with instances of inter-caste marriage, in some of which the highest and the lowest were united. It may be said that there is yet a good deal of caste feeling, even of caste pride, in some quarters of even the progressive section of the Bráhma Sámaj. That is perhaps true; and we shall perhaps have to wait a few generations more for this feeling and this pride to be fully eradicated. But the great change introduced by the reform carried out by Brahmánanda and his friends is that there is no caste distinction at the *basis* of the reconstructed Bráhma community that seceded from the Ádi Bráhma Samáj, no caste at its *basis*, as there is at the basis of orthodox Hindu Society and of the Ádi Bráhma Samáj.* The importance of this distinction cannot be exaggerated. The second point to be noticed is the part taken by the Brahmánanda in ascertaining from expert medical opinion the proper and the minimum age for the marriage of girls, and in getting Act III of 1872 passed. The impetus which that Act has given to social reform both inside and outside the Bráhma Samáj is simply incalculable. The third point to be noticed is Kesav's promotion of a moderate degree of the higher education of women by his Female Normal School, long closed, and his Victoria Institution which,

* Lately a number of inter-caste marriages have taken place in the Ádi Bráhma Samáj and Dr. Gaur's amendment of Act III has introduced inter-caste Hindu marriages even in the orthodox community.

under various vicissitudes, still continues. The fourth point is his promotion of mass education by the publication of the *Sulabh Samáchár*, the fore-runner of the cheap periodical literature of the day. With all his reforms, however, Kesav was soon found out by his more advanced friends and followers to be rather narrow and backward in his views on social matters. It was known long before, and his *New Sanhitá* makes it clear, that he never shook off mediæval and later Hindu views about the intellectual inferiority of women to men and the natural subjection of the former to the latter. Women, in the church founded by him, have never been given any great privileges or have taken any prominent part, and really high education for women in any shape, the university or otherwise, has always been at a discount in the whole body.* The Brahmánanda's views about church government were, as is well-known, of a theocratic type, and it was, as every one knows, after long and strenuous opposition from him and his immediate followers that the principles of representatives and constitutional church government triumphed in the Bráhma Samáj.

I now come to the concluding part of my lecture,

Since this was written, specially during the last few years, the state of things has changed much in the New Dispensation Church. Female preachers and lecturers, including some of Kesav's daughters, are now to be seen there, and many of the younger ladies have earnestly taken to higher University education.

in which I shall speak of the religious and social creed of the Sádharan Bráhma Samáj. At its foundation this Samáj seemed to some, both of its friends and enemies, to consist exclusively of those who had, before its foundation, opposed the special doctrines taught by the Brahmánanda, the doctrines that differentiated his Bráhmaism from that of the Ádi Bráhma Samáj. That some of the leaders of the new Samáj belonged to that party of oppositionists and that it was their voice which was at first the loudest in connection with the new movement, admits of no doubt. But with them had come to the Samáj men of a very different stamp, men who had no serious theological differences with Kesav, who had been brought up under his principles of *sádhan*, and who, but for the Kuchbehar marriage and the events immediately following it, would never have thought of founding or joining a distinct Bráhma church. When the turmoil of the marriage agitation and of the schism caused by it subsided a little, their voice began to be heard in the newspapers, addresses, books and pamphlets connected with the new movement; and it was found that they held all the doctrines that specially characterized the Brahmánanda's teachings, namely, the doctrines of Great Men, Inspiration, Special Dispensation, *Yoga*, *Bhakti* and *Vairágya*. They perhaps held these doctrines in a more rational form than their promulgator. At any rate they presented them in a form which proved more acceptable or less objectionable than the one

Kesav had adopted, and their teaching of these doctrines was, besides, free from that personal bias and motive which his opponents often ascribed to him. A feeble opposition was, however, raised against them now and then from some quarters, but gradually they gained ground in the Samáj and made converts of earnest, open-minded men. What was more satisfactory, some of those who had formerly opposed these doctrines tooth and nail were, either by the force of the new preaching or by a gradual inward growth in their own spiritual lives, converted to these views and became themselves preachers of them. The old views, however, did not quite die out, and they still live in some quarters and sometimes raise a feeble opposition to the new. In this respect the Sádharan Bráhma Samáj seems to me at present divided, though in unequal portions, into those who still think in the old Ádi Samáj fashion, and who would make short work with great men and historical dispensations if they could, and those who, except in the matter of Kesav's special leadership, have very little theological difference of a substantial nature with his immediate followers.

Now, this is the first doctrinal change noticeable in the history of the Sádharan Bráhma Samáj. The next change was of a more radical nature. It was nothing short of a change of the old Intuitional Dualistic Theism of the Maharshi and the Brahmánanda into an argumentative form of Theism with a distinct tendency to Monism. The old theory of In-

tuition was not altogether rejected, but more and more importance was gradually attached to argument till a more or less complete body of the rational evidences of Bráhmaism grew up in the church. This system of Bráhmic evidences, which is continually growing, constitutes, to my mind, the real glory of the Sádharan Bráhma Samáj and its most important contribution to the intellectual and spiritual progress of the Bráhma Samáj in general. To me it is the most tangible proof of the growth of the Bráhma Samáj from childhood to maturity. To be able to talk of lofty spiritual truths is not a sure sign of the spiritual progress either of an individual or of a society if the basis on which his or their faith rests is nothing more sound than unexamined and uncriticised traditional belief. I have seen Bráhmas of long standing and of recognised spiritual eminence losing hold of their most cherished beliefs in the course of an hour or so when the frail basis on which they stood has been clearly shown to them. Such religion can live only on relative ignorance—ignorance of the results of modern scientific and philosophical criticism. It languishes and dies at the first touch of such criticism. If it escapes such criticism, it dies a slow death at the hands of worldliness. The present hard struggle for existence and the all but perfect absorption in the pursuit of wealth engendered by it, tend to dry up the thirst for spirituality and loosen the soul's hold of supersensuous realities. It is only when God and our relation to him are seen to be stern, inexorable

realities, by evidences at least as sound as, if not of a higher order than, those which prove mathematical or scientific truths; that faith can, in this rationalistic age, stand the assaults of scepticism and worldliness. It is, therefore, extremely gratifying to see that the Sádharan Bráhma Samáj is slowly awakening to the real situation in the religious world and to the requirements of a religion which has no authoritative prophets or scriptures to appeal to. Not contented with appealing to mere subjective faith, it has been, for the last forty years or so, appealing to Universal Reason—to proofs which every earnest and thoughtful person may examine and accept. Its literature, on both religious and social subjects, is gradually assuming a more and more reasoned form. The consequence is, as happens where Universal Reason prevails over traditional belief and merely personal opinion, that where Bráhmas formerly saw difference and duality they now see unity, both in religious doctrine and in social philosophy. The old dualism of God and the world, and God and man, as independent realities, the dualism on which the old form of Bráhmaism insisted in various shapes, is, in a manner, dead and has given place to a doctrine of unity in difference. I speak, indeed, of the more thoughtful among the members of the Samáj, those who have the power of understanding these matters and of dealing with them, and not of the unreflective mass, or of those who, though educated in an outward sense, take no living interest in religious and philosophical

questions and no part in theological discussions. In so far as there is a theological system in the Samáj—and I admit that for a considerable percentage of its members there is no such system—I think the prevailing system is what I have already characterised as Argumentative Theism with a distinct tendency to Monism, while there is a residuum which has not gone on along the advancing tide, and for which the old Intuitional Dualistic Theism is still living. Criticisms, more or less of an uninformed and dogmatic nature, are sometimes levelled by this latter party against the new and growing creed.

Now, this new creed, it will be seen, exists in the Samáj in three more or less distinguishable varieties. It is found in a somewhat poetical and rhetorical form in the sermons, lectures and essays of the late Pandit Sivanáth Śástri. Pandit Śástri does not argue much; but in his *Baktritá-stabak* and his essay on *Isvar achetan śakti ki sachetan Purush* ("Is God an inanimate force or a living Person?") it is seen what high place he assigns to argument in matters religious. His monistic tendency is also unmistakably seen in his oft-repeated assertion that to say there is any other reality than God is to limit God's infinitude, and in the doctrine taught in the first series of his *Dharmajívan* that the human soul is a part or aspect of the Divine Spirit. His belief in the unity of God and Nature is seen in his teaching, to be found in his essay named above, that what we call matter has no force, no power,—all power being spiritual and identified with the Divine Will.

The second variety of the new theology is to be found in the works of the late Bábu Nagendranáth Chátturji, who was in some respects the most able exponent of the theology of the Sádháran Bráhma Samáj. Babu Nagendranáth was an indefatigable reasoner, and his three volumes of *Dharmajijnásá* present a closely reasoned exposition of almost the whole system of Bráhma doctrinal theology. He was quite abreast of the popular Natural Theology of England in his days and his work just named may be favourably compared with any English work on Natural Religion both as regards the evidences of Theism and the criticism of religious Scepticism and Agnosticism. I need hardly add that the tendency to Monism is even more distinct and pronounced in Bábu Nágendranath Chátturji's works than in those of Pandit Sástri. In the second volume of his *Dharmajijnásá* he clearly recognises the truth of Idealism; and in the third volume of the same book, in his lecture on *Anátmavåder Ayauktikatá* ("The Unreasonableness of Materialism") he admits the essential unity of the universal and the individual soul. But nevertheless Bábu Nagendranath's arguments are more or less of a popular nature and not based on any clearly thought-out system of Metaphysics.

The third form in which the new theology of the Sádháran Bráhma Samáj exists is to be seen in the works of Dr. Hirálál Háldár and those of the present lecturer. In this form it may be characterised as Metaphysical Idealism, allied on the one hand to the

Vedanta Philosophy of this country and on the other to the Hegelian Christianity of Europe. All theological questions are ultimately found to be questions of Metaphysics and cannot be satisfactorily solved unless they are subjected to the canons of a strictly philosophical discussion. The writers just named, therefore, think that a system of Metaphysics, incorporating the highest results of both ancient and modern thought, is the soundest basis for a religion which, on the one hand, recognises no authoritative prophets or scriptures and, on the other, seeks unity of thought, feeling and action. They think so, and have humbly contributed the first instalment of such a system and submitted it to the judgment of the Bráhma and the general Indian public. I must not, however, say anything in the present connection that may seem to be passing a judgment on my own humble part in the work hitherto done in this respect. As to my own opinions on the Philosophy of Bráhmaism, the present series of lectures will afford me an excellent opportunity to elaborate and expound them and submit them to the critical judgment of the educated public. For giving me this opportunity I am deeply indebted to the committee of the Theological Society and thank them most heartily. As to the peculiar features of this third form of the present day Bráhma theology, I have time enough only to point out what has often been said on other occasions, namely, that it has brought about or accentuated a partial revival of Vedantism in the Bráhma Samáj, a revival more of the earlier than of

the mediæval and latter-day form of Vedantism. Those who have taken part in the movement have also called it a return to Rámmohan Ráy. That the return is partial and at the same time real so far as it goes, will be evident to those who have taken the trouble of studying the literature connected with the movement.

From a fear of detaining you too long, I shall be very brief on the social views which the Sádháran Bráhma Samáj has brought into prominence. Scarcely less than the Samáj's contribution to the philosophy of Bráhmaism I value the constitutional form of church-government it has adopted and is moulding into maturity year after year, and the perfect equality with men which it has granted to its women. I am aware that neither our men nor our women are using to their fullest advantage the great privileges thus granted to them. We want to see greater earnestness and wider and more active co-operation among the members in the work of the Samáj, and we want our ladies to take a more active and prominent part in its intellectual and spiritual activities. Instead of one or two lady preachers and lecturers here and there, we wish to see dozens and scores of them. We wish their contributions to Bráhma literature to be deeper and more thoughtful. There is also a good deal of backwardness and dull conservatism in the Samáj about the education and rights of women which should be combated with earnest preaching and vigorous action. But if a Samáj is to be judged not by those who lag behind, but by its vanguard, then the prospect of social reform

must be pronounced to be most hopeful in the Sádháran Bráhma Samáj.

Here ends my critical sketch of Bráhma doctrines, and I come to the close of my lecture. I have taken you through this rather long history in order to show you, first, how the successive stages in it have naturally grown out of the preceding ones. You will also see from it, in the second place, that whatever form of Bráhmaism we may personally hold to, we cannot ignore the other forms. They are not only historically connected with our particular form, but they live as present realities. For instance, the mediæval Vedantism of Rájá Rámmohan Ráy, which the Bráhma Samáj may be said to have outgrown, not only lives in a changed form in the Vedantic revival which I have noticed in speaking of Kesavchandra Sen's later history and of the latest phase of the Bráhmaism of the Sadháran Bráhma Samáj, but it lives, we should see, almost exactly in the form in which the Rájá taught it, in such forms of Hindu revival as the Theosophical Society and the Vivekánanda movement. While the Bráhma Samáj has advanced, the country has, according to the laws of social progress, come up to the position that the Rájá occupied. So we cannot ignore any stage in the history of the Bráhma Samáj. In all that we do and say, we should be in close touch with that history. In all departments of thought, the historical method is now recognised as the only sound method. In the future lectures of the present series I shall endeavour strictly to follow

that method, and in all my reasonings have the history of the Bráma Samáj always before us. You must also have understood from what I have particularly said at the beginning of my lecture, and more or less at every stage of it, that in the course of my future lectures I shall never lose sight of such eminently practical matters as spiritual culture and social reform. They are, in my opinion, as much comprised in the Philosophy of Bráhmaism as abstract Metaphysics about the nature of the Deity and his relation to man and Nature. Philosophy itself is to me eminently practical, its aim being, as I conceive, to know the truth and act up to it. It is to me practical and sweet, and not dull, as it appears to those who do not care to know its true aim and nature. As the poet Milton truly says—

"How charming is divine philosophy!
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical, as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns." (*Comus.*)

May the Spirit of God, which has guided our thinkers and workers at every stage of the history of the Bráhma Samáj, be our guide in the discussions that commence to-day and reveal to us the truth as it is in him! All real truth is the direct light of his countenance; and it is to him only whom he chooses, in the inscrutable ways of his providence, that he reveals his truth.

*"Yam evaisha brinute tena labhya-
Stasyaisha átmá brinute tanum svám."*

LECTURE II

Authority and Free-thought in Brahmaism

I told you in my last lecture that Rájá Rámmohan Ráy's appeal to the higher Hindu scriptures as to an objective authority represented a stage of thought which, though outgrown by the Bráhma Samáj, had not yet beeu outgrown by the country in general, and spoke of the Theosophical Society and the Vivekánanda movement as examples of communities still holding to the Rájá's mediæval or Śankarite Vedantism. From what I said of the general tendency of the New Dispensation movement, or rather of the way in which that tendency is interpreted by those outside the movement, and of the prevalent dogmatic mode of presenting Bráhmaism more or less in all sections of the Samáj, it must have been evident, moreover, that the emancipation of the Samáj as a whole from external authority is yet far from complete. It is to be seen more in the declared principles of the Samáj than in the intellecutal life of its members. Such complete emancipation may safely be said to be confined to a rather small number of advanced members of the society. The fact is, that the complete

enfranchisement of thought is a process rather than an event, a spiritual *growth* rather than an intellectual change once for all effected by an argument or series of arguments. It is so in an individual, and more so in a community. If, therefore, an individual takes years to pass from the thraldom of external authority to a direct knowledge of spiritual truth, the transition, in the case of a community, from the one state to the other, must take generations even under the most favourable circumstances. However, the state of opinion around us, both in and outside the Bráhma Samáj, seems sufficiently to justify us in taking up for detailed discussion the subject I have chosen for this lecture.

If we inquire into the cause that leads people to rely upon the opinions of others rather than on their own perceptions and reasonings, it will be found in a natural credulity given us by God as a necessary protection in the early days of both individuals and communities, days in which the powers of direct knowledge are not properly developed. Children, even in the most free-thinking communities, naturally trust in the utterances of their elders and gain by such implicit trust. The most intelligent children break loose the earliest from this juvenile faith and, if their intellectual progress goes on uninterrupted, become, at the end, the most thoughtful of their kind. In the same manner, the most intellectual races are those which depend the least upon their leaders and teachers and

are the aptest to see and think out things for themselves. Now, it is this natural trust in those around us, specially in those who are older and more experienced than we, that is gradually developed into faith in prophets and scriptures ; and it is the gradual discovery that our elders and guides are themselves more or less ignorant and may mislead and deceive us, that developes into free-thought and gives rise to science—the science of Nature, of the human mind and of human society, and to Theology, the queen of the sciences, and ultimately to Metaphysics, the science of the sciences.

Now, gradually, our blind and implicit trust in our guides ceases to be quite blind, and tries to justify itself by Reason. Hence arises the doctrine of the authority of prophets and scriptures which, professing to be based on Reason, tries to stifle and silence Reason itself when it conflicts with doctrines received on the authority of teachers supposed to be inspired. This doctrine exists in two forms, one based on a belief in miracles and another on a theory of the eternity of ideas. The former is met with in Western writers. I have never seen it used by any Indian writer, but it is found in a popular form in the faith that people generally place in the workers of physical wonders. Such men are believed to be in the secret of God or the gods and are, therefore, supposed to be reliable teachers of things divine. The real basis of belief in *Mahátmás*—a belief which the teachings of the Theosophical Society have revived among educated Indians—

seems to be here—in the supposed power of the *Mahátmás* to suspend the ordinary laws of Nature and to work miracles by occult or supernatural powers. In Christendom the belief has been elaborated into an argument—an evidence of the revealed character of the Old and the New Testaments. The argument is this: None can break or suspend the laws of Nature but the Author of Nature or those to whom a certain amount of God's power over Nature is delegated. Such men, if they exist or have existed, must be accepted as chosen messengers of God competent to reveal his will and character. The prophets of the Old Testament and Jesus Christ and his Apostles are such men. In the miracles worked by them we see their credentials from God. Their teachings, therefore, constitute a supernatural revelation of the will and nature of God,—a revelation which supplements the imperfections of the natural revelation through Intuition and Reason. Now, I am aware that this argument from miracles for a supernatural revelation does not carry as much weight at the present day as it used to do once, that with the progress of science belief in miracles is passing away and may be said to be now confined only to the unscientific. The idea that God breaks or causes to be broken the laws which he has himself impressed upon Nature is now, among enlightened people, generally regarded as derogatory to the divine dignity; and the scientific conception of Nature and Society as governed by fixed laws, and the critical spirit, itself the result of scientific

education, which insists upon the clearest evidence for every belief, have made the proofs for miracles, if any events are ever alleged as such, all but impossible. The strongest presumption in relation to such events, in the minds of educated people, is that they are explicable, if not already explained, by the known laws of Nature, or that they are subject to laws which are yet unknown. It is only in the last form that belief in miracles seems still to exist among well-informed people. They are believed to be events governed by laws known only to a small number of wise men privileged by their higher intellectual and moral development to know the deeper mysteries of existence. However, even if we admit the possibility of miracles in the old sense, in the sense of actual violations of Nature's laws, the argument for a supernatural revelation is seen to be far from valid. Because God has given a man the power of breaking some of the laws of Nature, does it follow that he must be accepted as a true interpreter of God's mind and character? Does greater power necessarily imply greater knowledge, and if it does, is the knowledge imparted by such a man so sure and full that it should be accepted without question? Nor can the superior holiness of wonder-working prophets, if it can be established, avail much. Purity of character is not always accompanied with any extraordinary insight into truth. A good deal of gross ignorance and delusion is found compatible with superior purity of heart and will. Prophetic utterances,

issuing out of a pure soul, may be characterised by candour and singleness of heart, but are no proof of their objective truth. The prophet may be credited with a sincere belief in all that he asserts about his dealings with God, but his assertions are no evidence of the reality of those dealings. Turning now to the other sense in which miracles are believed, namely that they are fulfilments of the occult laws of Nature, —the results of hidden powers acquired by peculiar practices unknown to the generality of even the best-educated and most pious men,—we find that even in that sense they are not proofs that the teachings of the miracle-workers are true. The acquisition of occult powers, such powers, for instance, as may enable a man to walk over water or fly through the air, to see without eyes and hear without ears, or live with suspended consciousness for weeks, may have nothing to do with the spiritual life or with any general improvement in knowledge. They may be due to quite unspiritual disciplines or practices and to knowledge of quite a technical kind. And even if they have anything to do with the inner life of the soul, they cannot constitute their possessors as authorities on spiritual matters to be accepted implicitly and make it unnecessary for us to verify their statements by direct knowledge. If they assert that peculiar disciplines and practices opened up the eyes of their spirits and revealed to them the higher truths of the spiritual world, we can only try to go through the experiments proposed by them and

endeavour to verify the truth of their assertions by our own insight. If this is all the honour that is claimed for them, they are only guides and teachers and not authorities in any proper sense. The final authority is the direct knowledge of the subject of knowledge, or rather the power of knowing possessed by him, whatever may be the method in which this power is exercised to the fullest advantage and with the highest results.

Now, the second form in which the doctrine of external authority on matters spiritual is held by theologians seems to be peculiar to this country. It is the doctrine of the eternity of the Vedas—the eternity of the words of which they are composed. It was known in ancient Greece as the Theory of Ideas; but it does not seem to have been used there for theological purposes. Here it is held in some form or other by every orthodox system of philosophy and may be said to be the very corner-stone of orthodoxy. Our scholiasts hold the Vedas to be *apaurusheya*, without any personal composer. They are believed to be eternal and to have been, in ancient times, not composed by, but only manifested to, the *rishis*. The *rishis* were not their authors, but only their seers, *drashtárah*. Now, this doctrine is sought to be established by taking the term *Veda* or *Vedas* in a comprehensive sense, in the sense of being identical with knowledge, words or conceptions. The Vedas are, as you know, the foundation of all later Indian literature. Roughly speaking, they may be said to

contain, at least in a germinal form, all the conceptions that have found expression in the later thought of the nation. They are also the first important utterances of the human race and the earliest recorded expression of its thoughts. Again, before their embodiment in books, which is a comparatively recent occurrence, they were handed down by oral tradition from generation to generation. They were thus, as they still are, a body of *sabdas*, words—words expressing all important things and concerns of life, so that they pervade not only our literature, but also our everyday speech. The words which we utter day after day and moment after moment are the same as are found in the Vedas. The Vedas, therefore, are, to our philosophers, identical with words—words representing all things, earthly and heavenly. Now, what are words? Are they mere letters, mere sounds or combinations of them? Mere sounds, however combined, do not make real words unless such a combination conveys some thought,—some conception—to the mind. It is not merely the sounds ग (*ga*) and ओ (*o*) or their combination that form the word गो (cow). Unless the sound, or combination of sounds गो, conveyed the conception of an object to the mind, it would not be called a word. Letters or sounds, *varnáh*, therefore, are merely the outward and sensuous forms of words; their essence consists in the conceptions manifested to the mind on their utterance—in a *sphota*, as our philosophers call it. Now, a *sphota* or conception does not represent an individual thing, a *vyakti*; it represents a class, a *játi*. The word गो means not

merely this or that cow, but the whole class of cows. In perceiving a cow, we know that the object before us is only a particular embodiment of a generic conception. The particular complex of sensuous matter before us might pass away, but the conception would still remain and recur to our minds whenever the sensuous conditions of its recurrence should be fulfilled. It is the same with all other objects. We have to distinguish between the sensuous, particular, perishing matter on the one hand and the rational, universal and permanent forms in which this matter is moulded, as it were, when it becomes an object of our knowledge. It is this rational, universal, and permanent form in which every object appears to us—it is the idea or conception that arises in the mind when an object is perceived or its name uttered, that our philosopers call *sabda* or *sphota* to distinguish it from its merely passing or accidental aspect. Now, *sabdas* or conceptions, they say, are not only relatively permanent,—more permanent than sounds or letters—but absolutely permanent. They not only last after sounds have come and gone, but they existed eternally before sounds were ever uttered. They indeed become manifest only when sounds are uttered or other sensations are experienced, but such manifestation is not their origination. They existed before such manifestation, and they last even when it ceases. Now, this, in substance, is the doctrine of the eternity of the Vedas that you will find expounded by two of our most eminent philosophers, Sankara and Mádhava,

whom I have closely followed in my exposition. It is found in the former's commentary on the 28th aphorism, third páda, first chapter of the *Vedánta Sútras* and in the chapter on *Pánini Darshan* of the latter's *Sarvadarshan Sangraha.* You may see English translations of the respective passages in Professor Thibaut's translation of the former work and Professors Cowell and Gough's translation of the latter. The question now is whether the doctrine is true or not. Now, I must admit that it seems to me true. It can be shown, I think, that a conception is not a passing, perishing thing, but that every conception is the attribute of an infinite and eternal Mind, not made by but eternally existing in it. The metaphysical analysis of knowledge,—knowledge even of the simplest things, discloses to us, as the background of our rational existence, the Absolute Being in whom all things exist, and whose thoughts are re-produced in us in every act of knowing. But I would not, at this stage of our progress in the study of the Philosophy of Bráhmaism, undertake such an analysis. It would not be quite relevant to do so; for even if it were admitted, as I *have* admitted, that the above doctrine is true, the use made of it in establishing the infallible authority of the Vedas could not be defended. The Vedas are not merely a body of conceptions. In them, as in every other book, conceptions are variously combined into propositions. If, from the eternity of the conceptions, the validity of the propositions into which they are combined

were to be taken for granted, then not only the Vedas, but every book,—nay, every proposition ever uttered by any one,—would have to be accepted as infallible; and there would not be such a thing as error in the world. The argument, therefore, from the doctrine of the eternity of words, for an external revelation like the Vedas, overshoots its mark. It proves too much and is therefore self-condemned.

However, even if we admit for a moment that both the above arguments for an external revelation are valid, it may be shown that such a revelation is useless. An external authority propped on Reason shows that Reason is all sufficient. The very acceptance of a book or a prophet as sent from God presupposes the knowledge of a number of most important truths independently of the authority of the book or the prophet. It implies, for instance, our knowledge of the existence and attributes of God,—our knowledge that there is one undivided Author and Preserver of Nature, that he is all-knowing and all-powerful, that he loves us and wishes to promote our highest good, that there is a natural distinction of right and wrong, virtue and vice and that man has a higher destiny than that of the brutes, that man, as in the case of the prophets, has the power of receiving a direct revelation from God, and that ordinary people, even though they do not get such revelations, have the power of understanding them. Now, when so much of religion is knowable by Reason, why should it be imagined that a supernatural, external revelation

is necessary for disclosing to us the other truths of religion? The presumption, if nothing more, is rather on the side of Reason being capable of knowing these other truths. In fact, the development of Reason and its achievements in the field of both natural and moral science, have, more than anything else, lately discredited the idea of an external revelation. Men see that things formerly supposed to be unknowable by Reason have gradually come within its scope, that such knowledge as was at first supposed to be in the custody of the privileged few, has become, with the gradual advance of intelligence, the property of the many, and that things that were, sometime back, considered only to be matters of faith, have now become demonstrable. All this has made Reason bold and rendered it possible for it to say that it can know all things that are necessary to be known in ethical and spiritual life and that a supernatural, external revelation is not necessary. But we may go farther and say that there is something self-contradictory in the very idea of a supernatural revelation. Even if it be admitted that God can break his own laws—which really I regard as impossible, for laws, rightly understood, are seen to be parts of God's eternal and unchangeable nature,—it may be safely asserted that God cannot reveal himself to man unless through some power of knowing vested in man, call it sense, understanding, reason or anything else you please. There must be something in the nature of man corresponding to God's power of manifesting himself. Revelation, therefore, cannot but be a natural process.

Inspired prophets who are believed to be favoured with revelations must not, therefore, be supposed to have any powers which they do not share in common with ordinary men. The latter must be supposed to possess the same powers as the prophets do, only in a far less developed form. When Revelation is looked at in this light, it ceases to be supernatural. and it ceases to be external. If prophets and apostles speak on the authority of the nature which we share in common with them, the revelation received by them is as natural a thing as seeing, hearing and understanding; and if the truths received by them can be seen by us as well as by them, they are, in no sense, external authorities to us. But it is clear that before we have ourselves seen those truths, we cannot be sure that others have seen them; and that their assertions that they have seen them cannot take the place of our own eyes, though they can encourage us in using them in the best way we can.

We see, then, the errors of supernaturalism and of setting up an external authority in matters religious. We see the errors of these doctrines in their gross forms, forms in which they have ceased to be held by the members of the Bráhma Samáj. But there is a subtle, modified form of the doctrines or rather doctrine,—for they are, at the bottom, one—which the Bráhma Samáj is far from escaping. I spoke of it incidentally in my first lecture, but it deserves a more detailed treatment. What I meant by this modified Supernaturalism I cannot express better than I have

done in the following extract from an article on "Pratapchandra Mazumdar: the writer, orator and theologian," which I contributed to the *Hindustan Review* of Allahabad in its issue of July, 1905. Speaking of Mr. Mazumdar's work entitled *The Faith and Progress of the Bráhma Samáj*, I say: "It thus professed to be a defence of the religion of the Bráhma Samáj, and an account of its missionary and other activities. But it was so only partly and very imperfectly. On its speculative side it contained no reasoned and systematic exposition of Bráhmaism, such as would convince, or even be fully intelligible to, a non-Bráhma wishing to know what Bráhmaism is. The writer simply stated, with his usual wealth and elegance of language, what he believed Bráhmaism to be. Far from reasoning, he represented Reason to be a very imperfect and untrustworthy guide and held out 'faith' as the true guide to religion. He did not tell us what the test of true faith is and how it is to be distinguished from blind belief and superstition. There is a sort of supernaturalism running through this and other writings of Mr. Mazumdar, as well as those of his colleagues, —something that seems to me quite inconsistent with, and inimical to, rational religion, and which, I believe, is the chief cause why his and his friends' leadership has failed with many sober and thoughtful people. They, indeed, reject ordinary supernaturalism. They do not believe in physical miracles. They do not recognise the possibility of miraculous

incarnation or resurrection or any miraculous intervention of God in the afiairs of the world. Neither do they teach that God reveals truths through physical or angelic media in the way he is said to have done in the case of the ancient prophets. But they do teach, and are never tired of teaching, that there is a way,—call it 'faith,' 'the religious faculty,' 'the spiritual sense,' or by any other name—that there is a way, I say, of getting truths from God which dispenses with all tests and proofs of truths otherwise obtained. Science and Philosophy proceed upon well-recognised methods and subject their acquisitions to tests open to all cultured intellects. Even truths professing to be intuitive and fundamental are subject to analysis and deduction. But the 'faith' and 'inspiration' of the Bráhmas of the Sen and Mazumdar type spurn these tardy and tedious methods and place us in possession of all that we either wish or need to believe of God and things spiritual in the easiest and most direct manner possible. Far be it from me to say anything against inspiration and revelation. I am a firm believer in these processes. But I do not forget the obvious fact, as Mr. Mazumdar and his friends seem constantly to do, that all revelation takes place through some faculty or other of the human mind—call it by any name you please,—that all human faculties are fallible, and that, therefore, the deliverances of all are subject to the tests and methods of universal science, and have no objective value unless, by subjection to such tests, they can

commend themselves to the enlightened intellect of the race. This healthy rationalism, which I believe to be the basis of the Bráhma movement, and to which all churches and sects are gradually coming, is repudiated and condemned by Mr. Mazumdar and those who think with him. This is what I call their supernaturalism. It pervades all Mr. Mazumdar's writings. It makes him—curiously enough—afraid of free-thought in the truest sense and leads him to attach an undue importance to 'human centres,' 'an inspired apostolate' and the like." Now, it is not merely in the writings of Mr. Mazumdar and his colleagues that this modified supernaturalism is to be seen, though it more clearly and more frequently comes out in their utterances than in those of others. The tendency is common to all sections of the Bráhma Samáj. Its evils appear most glaringly, indeed, when those believing themselves to have got direct inspiration from God claim the right of their 'inspiration' to be recognised and received by others even though it may be clearly opposed to the dictates of Reason and Conscience. But even when this prophetic and dictatorial attitude is not taken up, the harm done by the mere appeal to faith and inspiration, habitual with many Bráhma preachers, is not less serious and is even more insidious on account of its more indirect form. Such teaching inevitably leads people to rely blindly upon the authority of particular Bráhma leaders or upon the general body of opinions current in the Samáj. It would hardly be too much to say, that

with many Bráhmas, the teachings of Maharshi Devendranáth Thákur and Brahmánanda Kesavchandra Sen occupy pretty nearly the same authoritative position as the Christian scriptures do with orthodox Christians or the Koran with orthodox Musalmans; and that with many others, not so faithfully devoted to particular teachers, the received body of opinions in their communities does the same. Almost as indolently as believers in external book revelations, the Bráhmas in question lean upon the above teachings or opinions and think they can safely dispense with free-thought on the great problems of religion. One cause that has greatly contributed to this blind and indolent dependence on authority is no doubt the doctrine of Intuition taught by the Maharshi and the Brahmánanda. I briefly stated and criticised this doctrine in my first lecture and reserved it for detailed treatment in another. That will be my third lecture. I need hardly say that I am not fundamentally opposed to the doctrine of Intuition. I object only to some of the forms it has assumed. Here, in connection with our present question, I must controvert one aspect of the doctrine as it is presented by Brahmánanda Kesavchandra Sen. In all his utterances he habitually disparages Reason and extols Inspiration, as if the two were mutually opposed or at any rate related as lower and higher, earthly and heavenly. His disparagement of Reason is shared by some of his opponents. They, in common with him, represent Reason as human and unreliable, and Faith or Inspira-

tion as divine and reliable. This distinction dates as early as the days of Kesav's first tracts on Bráhmaism; and though latterly he sometimes spoke of his New Dispensation as the harmony of Science and Religion, of Faith and Reason, and so on, the general tendency of his teachings is distinctly one of distrust of scientific and logical methods in teaching religion and of an undue reliance on prophetic and apostolic authority. In one of the tracts referred to—that on Revelation, the impressions received from Nature and the inferences drawn by the reasoning faculty are set down as earthly and unreliable, and the intuitive consciousness alone is set up as the organ of revelation from God. I think this doctrine fairly represents the opinion of those I have been speaking of. Now, I consider this view of our powers of knowing to be fundamentally erroneous, and the result of that deistic separation of Nature and man from God which still dominates the thoughts of some people, though both science and philosophy have disproved it and are disproving it every day. God is immanent in Nature and man, and all truths are directly from him. Our senses and our intellect, as well as our intuitive consciousness, are under his constant inspiration, so that it is as impossible for us to see, hear and understand as to intuit without the direct help of him, '*dhiyo yo nah prachodayát*,' who inspires our understandings. Nor are our senses and our intellect less reliable than our intuitive faculty. A common fallibility—a liability to error—attaches to all our powers—intuitive and ratiocinative. Our

senses delude us, if we are hasty and careless. We mistake our fancies and our inherited beliefs for intuitions, if we neglect to apply the proper tests to them. Our intellect draws false inferences, if we have a loose hold of the laws of thought. No aspect of our nature enjoys an immunity from error; and if this—immunity from error—makes an organ divine, the instrument of God, none of our faculties are divine, the intuitive as little as the ratiocinative. To extol the former as the only source of revelation is, therefore, a grave error, and betrays a superficial acquaintance with the nature of our cognitive powers. On the other hand, some people unduly disparage the reasoning faculty. They seem to think that there is nothing fixed in reasoning; that reasoned doctrines or systems of doctrines, whether scientific or religious, may indefinitely change; that one reasoner or school of reasoners can, with nothing more than greater ingenuity, overthrow what another has built with much care and labour. But nothing can be a greater error than this. The progress of the sciences, the systems of proved truths presented by them in almost all departments of thought, show the puerility of this view of Reason. People with any pretension to education should see that the fundamental laws of thought, the rules for finding out the valid moods and figures of syllogism and the canons of inductive inference are as fixed as anything can be, and are not changeable by the whims, caprices and sophistries of either scientific or religious sectaries. The reasoning

faculty is, therefore, as divine as the intuitive, if there is at all such a division between our cognitive powers; and if the latter is a source of inspiration, so is the former. One reason why a distinction is made between the two, as organs of knowledge, is that the intuitive faculty is, like animal instincts, regarded as a perfect organ from the very beginning—an unerring guide to the knowledge of God and things connected with the spiritual life; whereas the reasoning faculty is supposed to be, as it really is, something which grows by culture and which knows its objects by long and slow processes of growth. It seems to be consistent with the Divine wisdom and goodness and the dignity of religion, that man should be endowed with the power of knowing God and all other things that relate to his spiritual growth irrespectively of the knowledge and education acquired by him,—that the thoughtless and the illiterate should, as much as the erudite and the thoughtful, be in possession of the truths that pertain to their salvation. But we must look facts in the face and not construe the real world according to preconceived notions, however pleasant they may seem to us. Facts, then, show that there is no such royal road to true religion as the theorists I speak of take for granted. It is found that in barbarians and in the illiterate among civilized nations, the intuitive as much as the reasoning faculty is clouded and unreliable as a guide. Intuition in them reflects the image of God and other spiritual realities as dimly

and distortedly as their uncultured Reason does the face of Nature and Society. The fact is, our intuitions take at least as much time to come out in their true character as unalloyed and universal truths as the higher discoveries of science to announce themselves as such. I think that, as being deeper and more recondite, they take much more time to come into clear consciousness than the latter. And there seems to be nothing inconsistent with God's wisdom and goodness in this. As in Biology, the higher organisms are found to take more time to attain their full growth, so in the evolution of mind it seems quite consistent with the Divine economy that the higher the faculty the slower should be its process of development.

We thus see that for those who have passed the childhood of their souls and in whom the critical faculty has been awakened, there is no external authority to depend upon, either in the shape of supernaturally inspired prophets or supernaturally revealed scriptures or even teachers professing to have received revelations through their intuitive consciousness,—far less in the shape of opinions accepted by the great majority of their own communities or even the majority of the human race. To such men thought must be absolutely free—free from the trammels of all powers external to itself. They may study, and they must study if they are wise, the treasured acquisitions of those who have preceded them and those of their contemporaries; but as in

their moral, so in their intellectual lives, they must regard themselves as a law unto themselves. As they should consider it to be nothing short of slavery and inconsistent with the dignity of their souls as moral beings to be used as mere instruments and not as free agents for promoting the good of others, so should they consider it to be beneath their dignity as rational beings to be blindly guided by prophets or scriptures or the mere voice of the majority. It is not open to them to accept anything as true that their own souls do not perceive as such. They need not mind the taunt levelled against them by the blind followers of Tradition, that their religion is only a conjugation of the verb *to think*—only what I think, we think, you think, he thinks and they think. If Bráhmaism were really nothing better than this, it would still be the highest truth attainable by us. There can be no higher authority to a man than his own sense of the true and the right. One cannot transcend one's own nature any more than one can jump out of one's own shadow. But we know that thought, in its pure and ultimate nature, is not a private property. It is not particular : it is universal. It is not contingent and changeable : it is necessary and eternal. It is not subjective : it is objective. It is not merely ideal : it is the true image, or rather the direct manifestation, of Reality. It is not merely human, it is Divine ; for it is the light of God's own countenance in the soul of man. But we must wait for further discussion to be fully convinced of the truth of these statements.

But if neither prophets nor scriptures nor the general sense of our race can be our authorities in the proper and primary sense of the term, they may be, and must be, accepted as our authorities in the sense of guides, teachers and helps. The child's progress in knowledge and moral experience depends, as we have seen, on his following his elders and teachers. A child prematurely breaking loose from the golden chains that bind him to his nurses and guides can bring nothing but danger upon himself. One of the most repulsive and dangerous objects in Nature is a stripling who, either from misfortune or a vicious system of training, has not learnt the lessons of obedience and reverence. Much of what is true of such a young person applies to the mature man who forgets to learn, revere and obey. The grown-up and awakened man's obedience and subordination are, indeed, different from those required of the child. In the latter they are blind and often constrained: in the former, they are open-eyed and free. But there is the common element of guidance and dependence in both the phenomena. In both cases there is the sense of a vast fund of treasured experience to be appropriated. Neither the child nor the mature man has to begin quite afresh and gain everything by mere personal labour without capital. It is very necessary that we should fully understand what this means and determine our conduct accordingly; or we shall bring upon us all the evils that wild and unchecked

rationalism has caused in all ages. As I say in the second essay of my *Hindu Theism*: "An individual is not merely the result of other individuals, of those that have gone before him. In every individual there is something original which cannot be explained by a mere reference to his past history—to his natural and spiritual ancestry. Every individual, indeed, comes with a fund of inheritance, but he also adds something to that fund. This addition constitutes his originality. The condition, however, of this addition is the individual's participation in the treasured experience of his ancestors. This participation forms the ground, as it were, on which the individual stands, as well as the strength that enables him to work in the field of experience which opens before him on his coming into the world. To every individual, Nature unfolds a realm of thought which she invites him to conquer and take possession of. It is, at his birth, an unappropriated treasure to him; and its appropriation is, in a real sense, a new experience to him, an experience which cannot be resolved into things inherited from his ancestors. To bring these things under his mind's sway constitutes that new experience. In this experience, his progress may be greater than that of his ancestors, both quantitatively and qualitatively. He may know many things more than they did, and know them more correctly than they. There may be evolved in him a set of emotions and activities not experienced by them; and these may be much higher and better than theirs, carrying him

much nearer than them to the goal which Reason sets before the human mind. There is thus a wide field left for the free play of thought. The mind of man is not neccssarily tied down to the errors and foibles of his fathers. He is meant for progress, and progress implies freedom. But this freedom is based on due subjection to authority (in the sense just explained). Progress is determined by the extent to which and the way in which the treasured experience of the past has been utilized and assimilated. He who has not learnt what the past has to teach him, strives in vain to leave the past behind. He must serve his apprenticeship in full before he is enabled to strike out a new line for himself. It is only by obtaining a full possession of the treasures which the experience of the past has left for us—only by patiently learning the lesson it has to teach, that we can rise above it and see things which it did not see, and do things it did not do." Elsewhere, in speaking specially of the importance of studying the ancient Theistic literature of our own country, I have said what will bear repetition on the present occasion. "Modern Indian Theists," I say, "commit one of the greatest blunders possible when they think, as some seem to do, that they can ignore the Theism which has come down from their ancestors—ignore its literature, its systems of doctrine and discipline, and yet build up a Theism of their own, a purer and nobler one, by their individual thoughts and spiritual endeavours, and effect their and their country's

salvation by means of it. It is the same blunder as that of a sciolist endeavouring to build up a system of science without acquainting himself with the progress science has made up to this time, or that of a rich man's son refusing to use the stored up wealth of his ancestors and striving to be rich through innumerable privations and difficulties." It is deeply to be regretted that so little attention is paid to these truths by those who ought to know better, and that the study of religious and philosophical literature is so much at a discount in the Bráhma Samáj. The idea that no prophets or scriptures are to be blindly accepted, but that truths are to be directly known by every one for himself, seems to have given rise to an impression in many a Bráhma's mind that no external help is to be taken in knowing truth; whereas it ought to produce the very opposite idea that every available help from every quarter is to be taken to turn the thoughts inward—to reach the deepest, the most ultimate and the most far-reaching principles lying at the root of our nature, to sharpen our reasoning powers so as to enable them to detect the subtlest fallacies, to awaken the kindliest sympathies hidden in our hearts with all our fellow creatures, so that we may be enabled to form some idea in our minds of the Infinite Love that encircles us, and to strengthen our wills and prepare them for those heroic struggles and self-denying labours which conscience sets before us as the way to the realisation of our ideals All who help us to know God and

our duties as the children of God, whether they are philosophers, scientists, theologians, historians, poets or novelists, are our prophets; and all books that help us in the same way, whatever may be the subject they treat of, are sacred books to us, whethor the ignorant and the thoughtless call them so or not. As religious men, all scriptures specially so called are our scriptures. As Theists, all theistic literature, Indian or foreign, is our literature. As Hindu Theists, the spiritual children and successors of the *Rishis*, the *Upanishads* and the whole body of Hindu *sástras* expounding, amplifying or correcting their teachings, are our *sástras* in a special sense. May God enable us to learn humbly and reverently from all the blessed dispensations that he has vouchsafed fcr our tuition and guidance, and yet be always free in the glorious freedom which belongs to his children!

LECTURE III

Brahmic Doctrine of Intuition

As promised in my first two lectures, I shall give in this a critical explanation of the Brahmic doctrine of Intuition briefly stated in my previous lectures. I have told you in my second lecture that I consider the doctrine of Intuition, as taught by the Maharshi and the Brahmánanda, and as it is held by the generality of Bráhmas, as substantially true. But the form in which I hold it is so different from the prevalent form that the identity between the two can be recognised only by a close observer. My system of metaphysics is very different from that taught by our chief leaders; and I must, in the course of these lectures, expound it bit by bit. I might proceed to expound it at once and, having done so, show the difference between it and that which is current; but in that case it would be difficult for many of my hearers to follow me. The better method would be for me to take for granted much of the received doctrine as true and criticise only a few points at a time. At the end I hope to show the whole of our recent gains in the philosophy of Bráhmaism and the various points in which the new doctrine differs from the old. To illustrate what I mean, I may say that I differ *in toto* from the doctrine implied in the teachings of all our great leaders,

that we have different faculties for knowing different classes of objects. It is commonly thought that we know certain things by our senses, certain things by the understanding, certain things by conscience and certain other things by spiritual intuition, and so on, the number of faculties differing in different forms of the theory. Now, my theory is that the act of knowing is indivisible, that just as the mind is one, so is its power of knowing one, and its object also one. I think that in every act of knowing the whole mind is engaged, and it knows only one thing, one indivisible object, namely God. Sense, understanding and reason I hold to be, not different faculties of the mind cognisant of different things, but only different forms or aspects in which the same object appears to us. In what we call sensuous perception, logical understanding and reason or spiritual intuition, the same object, God, I hold, appears to us in a more or less complex form. Now, I know very well how startling such a view will seem to many. But I think it can nevertheless be made intelligible and acceptable to them. This, however, will require a good deal of preliminary discussion and much fine analysis of thoughts and things. I mean not to undertake all this at the present stage of our progress. I shall, as I have already said, take for granted the substantial truth of the received theory of knowledge. I shall consider myself as occupying broadly the same standpoint with those whom I criticise, and employ the same philosophical terminology that they use. I shall take for granted that we

have a faculty of intuiting fundamental truths and confine myself to the question of the tests by which such truths are to be recognised. By thus keeping myself in touch with the doctrinal history of the Bráhma Samáj, and using the current terminology of Bráhmaism, I hope to attain my main object more successfully than by the more exact but less practical method mentioned above.

First of all, then, I shall read to you one or two extracts from Brahmánanda Kesavchandra Sen's tract on the "Basis of Bráhmaism," in which you will find a clear statement of the doctrine of Intuition as taught by him. He says: "Intuition denotes those cognitions which our nature immediately apprehends—those truths which we perceive independently of reflection:" Again "To take the simplest case, tell me how you get at the knowledge of self. Is not this an immediate and spontaneous cognition? Do you arrive at it through any logical formula? Tell me likewise how you come to know the reality of the external world. Is it not true that logic can never give you this knowledge? When you see a rose, all that you are conscious of is the sensation of that rose; but how could you, even if all the principles of logic were pressed to your service, infer from that sensation the existence of a real rose outside? Is not the reality of external objects immediately cognizable by all men? Tell me also whence comes your belief that every object is a substance, if nothing can be known of it through

the senses beyond a number of qualities. How do you know that every effect has a cause? It is needless to multiply instances; those already adduced will, I hope, convince you that some of our cognitions are not the results of reflection." The writer then proceeds to enumerate the marks or characteristics of intuitive truths. "The first mark of intuition is," he says, immediacy. Intuitive truth is directly cognizable; it is seen face to face; it is perceptible, if I may apply the word to spiritual objects. Cause, substance, power, infinite, duty, are all immediately apprehensible: no reflection can give us these ideas. Hence some philosophers have applied the term sense to intuition. We often meet with such expressions as Moral Sense, Sense of Duty, Spiritual Sense, Senses of the Soul, clearly indicating that as by the bodily eye we see outward objects, so by intuition we see spiritual realities. Another mark of intuition is spontaneity. The mind apprehends intuitive truths spontaneously, instinctively, without any voluntary effort. They spring outright from our nature; they are not wrought out by reasoning. They are facts of our constitution; we cannot create or destroy them if we will; they do not depend upon the fiat of our volitions. Hence, though we may ignore them in theory, oftentimes they are found to govern us practically. Metaphysical theorists held for a long time the ideality of external objects; but there is hardly a sane man who practically adheres to this shocking theory. Some

people seem to deny God, and bring forward various arguments to show the plausibility of such denial but often do circumstances occur in which the intuitions force themselves up from the depths of their constitution, and vindicate their rights with a practical potency which theories in vain try to gainsay. The personality of our nature many have denied; and yet every man practically believes that there are actions which he may do or not do as he chooses. Thus you see that intuition is spontaneous, natural, involuntary, permanent and practical. Hence it has been denominated Spontaneous Reason, Natural Sight, Instinctive Belief, Practical Reason, etc. Another mark of intuition is universality. If intuitive truths are facts of our nature, and are independent of our will, they are universal. They are in the possession of the wise and the illiterate—of the rich and the poor. Hence they have been called Catholic Convictions, Common Sense. Another mark of intuition is originality. Intuitive truths are not inferences from certain premises. They are primitive truths; they do not originate in reflection. They furnish materials for reasoning and scientific reflection—themselves underived and primitive. They are the starting points of our higher knowledge, as sensations are of all inferior knowledge. Hence they have been styled first truths, primitive cognitions. The last characteristic I have to mention is that intuitions are self-evident. They are axiomatic truths which do not admit of demonstration. Every

effect must have a cause—is a proposition the truth of which no one disputes, yet no one can demonstrate. Intuitions require no light of evidence to exhibit them: they shine in their own light. They are accordingly not merely cognitions, but convictions and beliefs. We not only know, but firmly believe, that every effect has a cause, that good should be done and evil avoided, etc. Hence intuitions have been termed *A priori* Truths, Axioms, Faith. These are the principal characteristics of intuitive cognitions."

Now, it will be seen that the five characteristics of intuition enumerated in this extract, namely, immediacy, spontaneity, universality, originality and self-evidence, may be reduced to three, namely, universality, spontaneity and self-evidence; and we find that in Babu Rájnáráyan Vasu's work entitled *Dharmatattvadípiká* these three are the only characteristics recognised of intuitive belief. Practically, I have found, ever since I joined the Bráhma Samáj, which I did in my early youth, Bráhmas depending upon the first two, specially the first, universality. The oft-repeated answer to all questionings about the fundamental truths of religion was, in those good old days, the appeal to the universality of belief in them. It was specially so in regard to belief in God. "I believe in God," was the constant confession of a Bráhma in those days, and is so even now, more or less, "because the belief is natural; it is intuitive. And its naturalness, its intuitiveness, is proved by the fact that it is a universal belief,

a belief universally held by mankind; or, if there are exceptions, if there are men who do not hold this belief, the exceptions only prove the rule. The all but universal prevalence of the belief shows that it has its roots in human nature, and that there must be something abnormal, something unnatural, in men who do not share this belief." Now, I must confess that this appeal to the universality of our belief in God as a proof of its validity does not carry any weight with me now, whatever it may have done in my youth. First, it seems somewhat audacious to consign to virtual blindness some of the best and most cultured members of our race, namely those who have not seen their way to believing in a Divine Being. If belief in God were such a plain and easy thing as it is represented to be, it would be wonderful that so many earnest and thoughtful men could not cherish it even though they tried to feel their way to it. Secondly, it seems somewhat inconsistent to place the reliability of our belief in God on its universality. We certainly do not believe in God *because* the belief is universal, *because* we know that all men, or almost all, believe in God. We do not wait, we do not suspend our belief, till we know that the belief prevails universally or all but universally. The universality of the belief is an opinion which only travellers and anthropologists are competent to pronounce true or false; but we become believers in God and even theologians long before we become travellers or anthropologists. Thirdly, though, as we shall see by and by, belief

in God lies unconsciously at the basis not only of every piece of religious knowledge, but of all knowledge whatever, it is by no means true, as travellers and anthropologists themselves admit, that a conscious belief in the true God, the God of all true Theism, Hindu, Christian or Muhammadan, is universal. There are whole nations which are devoid of the knowledge of the true God. A vague belief in some supernatural power devoid of any attributes truly divine, is not belief in God. Belief in a demon, a destroying power, belief even in benevolent spirits with human limitations,—which is all that seems to be held by several nations,—such a belief, I say, is not belief in God. Now, if only that is to be held intuitive which is consciously held by all, if nothing is an intuition which is not consciously universal, then belief in God is not an intuition, and the claim of conscious universality for intuition proves suicidal. Fourthly, there is all the difference between subjectivity and objective validity between a universal belief and a universal truth; and even if the universality of a belief were satisfactorily established, the reality of its object would still be open to question. Opinions which the progress of knowledge has shown to be false, have sometimes prevailed universally or all but universally. As Principal Caird truly says: "The members of a community or society at the same stage of intellectual or spiritual progress will necessarily coincide in their general elementary beliefs, and a time has been when the whole world accepted, on the apparently irrefragable testimony of

sense, facts and ideas which the progress of knowledge has proved to be futile." There was a time when belief in witches and demons was universal or all but universal; and it is quite possible that many or at any rate some opinions which are now universally or all but universally prevalent, will one day be found quite groundless. We thus see that the universality of a belief is no proof of its objective truth.

Let us now consider the second characteristic of intuition mentioned above, its immediacy, spontaneity or originality, all of which convey substantially the same idea. At a certain stage of our progress we are all apt to attach great importance to this characteristic of intuition. Of our belief in God, we are at times inclined to think in the following way: "I have examined all the ordinary sources of belief and have found that it does not arise from any of them. It is not derived from the testimony of the senses, it is not the conclusion of a deductive or inductive argument, it is not derived from the authority of any scriptures or prophets, nor is it a tradition handed down by venerable antiquity. Hence I see that it is spontaneous." Now, it seems to me that this appeal to spontaneity for proving the validity of a belief is nothing but a slightly disguised *petitio principii.* Why do you believe? Because the belief comes, and comes spontaneously. In plain language, it is nothing more or less than saying, "I believe, because I believe," which is no reason at all and may very well be altogether spared. If the only ground of our belief in God

is that the belief comes to us and comes spontaneously, —though, there is no need for this addition,—we have evidently no right to call upon others who say that it does not come to them at all, spontaneously or otherwise, to accept our belief and make all manner of sacrifices for it. We must also see that notwithstanding the alleged spontaneity of the belief, it is subject to occasional doubts. We see that it forsakes us now and then and leaves us blindly groping in the dark. Now, what is the worth of a test which places our belief in God in the same category as the most transient impressions and ideas? Secondly, the analysis which pronounces that a belief is not the conclusion of a reasoning or a mere tradition, cannot be, in all cases, trustworthy. The source from which a belief was originally derived, be it reasoning, tradition or something else, may be forgotten and yet the belief itself retain a strong hold upon us, if it is a universal belief or a belief all but universal, or if it is a source of comfort to us. I again quote from Principal Caird: "To take for granted that notions or beliefs which present themselves to the common mind spontaneously and without any conscious process of reflection, are to be accepted as ultimate and underived, and therefore as absolutely true, would obviously be a very haphazard procedure. For very little consideration is needed to see that many notions or beliefs, which occur to the mind with an air of spontaneity and self-evidence, are the result of a process of thought more or less complicated; and again, that so far from

being incapable of question or verification, such notions are not seldom nothing more than unwarrantable popular assumptions. By a process of arbitrary association, combinations of ideas may unconsciously be formed of which the result assumes to the mind the aspect of an ultimate and insoluble necessity of thought, and almost any intense feeling or inveterate belief, of which the origin is not remembered, or which has been silently imbibed from the intellectual atmosphere in which our minds have grown up, becomes apparently its own evidence, and supersedes all further need of rational proof. It is obvious, therefore, that a feeling of conviction which can be artificially produced cannot be adduced as evidence that, in any given case, we have reached a primary element of thought."

Now, the above remarks almost dispose of the third test of intuition mentioned above, namely self-evidence. It labours under all the disadvantages of a purely subjective test. What seems self-evident to you does not appear so to me. To compare intuitions to the axioms of geometry does not seem to prove either relevant or effective ; for while the truth of the latter are not open to question, that of the former is challenged by thinkers of various schools. Unless, therefore, self-evidence or necessity is explained in a way that lends to it more of objectivity and universality than one finds in it in the explanation given by the generality of Bráhma writers, I do not see that it possesses any advantage over the two tests we have already disposed of. Such an explanation,

however, we meet with nowhere either in the works of the Maharshi and the Brahmánanda, or in those of Bábus Rájnaráyan Vasu and Dvijendranáth Thákur. It is only when we come to the writings of Bábu Nagendranáth Chátturji that we meet with a somewhat clear idea of necessity as applied to a proposition. Bábu Nagendranáth does not make much use of the idea, but he states it clearly in his lectures and submits to the test proposed by him the one or two first principles which he employs in his arguments. The idea is to be found everywhere in recent English works on Natural Theology, for instance in those of Tulloch, Flint and Martineau. According to those writers the necessity of a proposition means that its opposite is inconceivable. A merely universal or all but universal belief may be rejected by a small but strong minority. A belief which is spontaneous to one may not be so to another. But a proposition the opposite of which is inconceivable, has only to be understood in order to be accepted as true. The existence of God, say these writers, is one of such truths. It stands upon the same evidence as mathematical axioms. Just as it cannot be conceived that two straight lines can enclose a space, that parallel straight lines can meet, etc., so it cannot be conceived that there should be effects without a cause, that phenomena should exist without a noumenon, that the finite should have any life except in the Infinite, etc. The reason why these propositions are not universally felt to be necessary, is that they are not understood by

all. The unbelief, polytheism or idolatry of illiterate and thoughtless people can be explained by the fact that they do not understand the ideas of first cause, spirit, noumenon and infinity, not even the ideas of conceivability and inconceivability. If they understood these ideas, they would be Theists. The Agnosticism or Scepticism of cultured and thoughtful people can be explained by the fact that culture and thoughtfulness in one department of knowledge do not necessarily imply these qualifications in other departments, not certainly in those which are far removed from the former by the nature of the objects dealt with and by the method employed in dealing with them. Professor Flint says that English physicists, who can exhaustively analyse a drop of water, show themselves quite incompetent in analysing a thought. In this country we have seen how shining University graduates and sharp legal practitioners have proved themselves to be very bad reasoners on social subjects, and acute politicians have generally, in all countries, shown a very sad lack of sound moral judgment.

Now, I think that the above view of intuition is substantially correct. The test of inconceivability of the opposite, rightly understood, is a true test of intuitive belief. But the test, when only thus stated and not further explained, is open to the same charge of subjectivity which vitiates the ordinary Bráhmic view of self-evidence. What is inconceivable to one, it may be rightly objected, may be conceivable to another. What is inconceivable to you in the midst of

your peculiar surroundings, may be conceivable to others placed in quite different circumstances. What is inconceivable now, at the present stage of our knowledge, may be conceivable when our knowledge will have extended far beyond its present stage. The power of conceiving differs in different places, times and stages of culture. The diurnal motion of the earth, the existence of antipodes, etc., were once inconceivable, but now, after the lapse of centuries of progress, they are not only conceivable, but are well-established scientific truths. The steam engine, the electric telegraph, tramcar and railway, the telephone, the phonograph, wireless telegraphy and other wonderful discoveries of modern times would perhaps have baffled the conceptions of our ancestors, but they are now stern, tangible facts. So that, it may be argued, the inconceivability of the opposite is an entirely subjective test and no evidence of objective truth. That one or even all cannot conceive the opposite of a proposition, is no proof of its truth. Time or different circumstances may make the now inconceivable conceivable and thus prove the falseness of the propositiou.

Now, it will be seen that the above objection is based on a particular interpretation of the term 'inconceivability.' In it 'inconceivability' is almost identified with 'unbelievability', and the whole force of the objection is due to this interpretation. But 'inconceivability' has a deeper sense. It also means 'unthinkableness' or 'inconsistency with the fundamental laws of thought,' and in this sense it is true that the

inconceivable is untrue and its opposite true. It is quite true that many things which are inconceivable in the sense of unbelievable to some people, are not inconceivable to all, and that believability being a mere subjective and contingent state of mind, may and does often differ in different times, places and stages of knowledge, and is therefore not a safe test of truth. But this is not true of the test of inconceivability of the opposite in the sense of unthinkableness of the opposite—inconsistency of the opposite with the fundamental laws of thought. The motion of the earth and the existence of antipodes might have been once unbelievable on account, perhaps, of an apprehension that people standing on the opposite side of the earth would be thrown over their heads, but it cannot be said that these truths were, at that time, unthinkable—inconsistent with the fundamental laws of thought. People standing with their heads downwards, with apparently nothing to keep them from failing down, might once have been unbelievable, but there was nothing to make it unpicturable to the imagination. It is the same with other things which were unbelievable with ancient people but are believed now. Notwithstanding the absence of evidence to make them believable, they had nothing in them inconsistent with the fundamental laws of thought. If then, the true sense of 'inconceivability' be 'unthinkableness,' 'inconsistency with the fundamental laws of thought,' a proposition the opposite of which is inconceivable is a necessary proposition

and represents in that sense an intuitive belief. Now, the laws that govern all analytic thought are those of identity and non-contradiction. A proposition the opposite of which is self contradictory cannot but be true, since it then comes under the law of identity; and an identical proposition, a proposition of which the predicate asserts nothing but what is contained in the subject, cannot but be true. The test of the inconceivability of the opposite is thus nothing more or less than that of the self-contradictoriness of the opposite or the identity of the subject and the predicate. When the predicate of a proposition expresses what is implied or virtually contained in the subject, we know that the proposition is necessarily true and its opposite false.

Now, as to the first principles of religion, specially belief in the existence of an infinite and morally perfect Being, what I mean by saying that this belief is necessary and in that sense intuitive, is that the non-existence of God is inconceivable, unthinkable,—that all propositions implying denial or doubt of the existence of God—the propositions which form the basal principles of Scepticism and Agnosticism—are self-contradictory. It can be shewn, I contend, by an analysis of our beliefs in the world, in man and in a moral order of the universe, that they all necessarily imply a belief in an infinite and perfect Being. It can be shewn that every perception, every thought, every particle of knowledge, however acquired, and even our doubts and misgivings, presuppose the existence of an infinite, all-comprehending Spirit who runs through all things

and makes all things possible. In all that we do, think and feel, we are obliged, by the fundamental laws of thought, to postulate, often unconsciously, the existence of an infinite Life, an infinite Love, as the necessary basis of all life and thought. It can be shewn further that our apprehension of God is not of the nature of a mere belief—a belief which, however necessary and deep-rooted in the human mind, may or may not have a real object answering to it. It can be shewn by analysing our knowledge of ourselves and the world, that in knowing these we know God, and know him directly,—that our knowledge of the world and ourselves is really the knowledge of God,—that in every act of knowing we really know him, but recognise him not. This recognition of God in all our cognitions is, I hold, the result of a keen and searching analysis of knowledge and the privilege of those who search God through devout and reverent meditation.

But analysis presupposes a prior synthesis. Theism could not be shewn to be in such perfect accord with the fundamental laws of thought, and Scepticism and Agnosticism to be inconsistent with these laws,—it could not be shewn that the proposition 'God is true' in its various forms, asserts nothing in the predicate except what is contained in the subject—unless the subject and predicate of this proposition were indissolubly connected in the unity of experience. The idea of God is the synthetic principle underlying all experience, internal and external, subjective and objective, a principle that contains and explains all other synthe-

tic principles, whether those of time and space, or of number, quantity and quality, of substance, causality and reciprocity, or of the good and the beautiful. As such this principle is universal—not all but universal, but unexceptionably universal, underlying even the Atheist's thought and experience. As such it is also spontaneous, immediate or original, being above all proof, since it is the very ground of all proof, of all thought and experience. To help to bring this idea into consciousness where it lies dormant, to bring it into clear consciousness where it is only vaguely present, is the task of the theologian. It will thus be seen what an incalculable amount of deep reflection and searching investigation is needed for the proper understanding of intuitive truths. Intuition is, in one sense, the most familiar of all things; in another sense, it is one of those things which it is most difficult to understand and realise. Though the very basis of all thought and experience, it is apt to be confounded with the many fancies and superstitions incidental to our natural limitations and thus become subject to doubt. It is only by deep thought and spiritual insight that it can be seen in its true nature and restored to a conscious dominion over the soul. We often think we know enough of Intuition to need any thought and discussion on the subject. And yet we always complain of the weakness of our faith. That shows that we have not felt the power of true Intuition. Intuition is faith, and faith, as Kesavchandra Sen truly says, is direct vision. He alone is a true

Intuitionist, he alone knows what Intuition truly is, to whom faith has become as clear as sight,—who sees God as clearly as he sees himself and the world.

So far I have given you a critical exposition of the doctrine of Intuition common to all Bráhma writers. We may very well stop here. But as there is yet some time at our disposal, and you are not, I hope, yet tired, I may as well notice something peculiar in Maharshi Devendranáth Thákur's teachings about Intuition. The Maharshi seems to use the word *átmapratyaya*, which he uses more frequently than the more common term, *sahaj jnán*, in two senses: the first being our inborn faith in God and other non-sensuous realities. The other sense in which he uses it is our consciousness of our own self and the testimony which this consciousness bears to the existence of the infinite Self. I shall let the Maharshi himself speak. I translate a passage from his fifth lecture at the Bhawanipur Brahma Vidyálaya: "Since I am, therefore Brahman, my Creator, Preserver and Guide, is,—this is *átmapratyaya.* The person who is my Creator, Preserver and Guide, is my well-wisher, friend, support and Lord—this is self-evident *átmapratyaya.*" In several other passages of the same lectures, the Maharshi says that the finiteness of the human soul reveals its dependence on the Infinite Spirit. It were to be wished that the Maharshi had explained this truth and tried to bring it home to the intellect of his audience; for the point is really of the utmost importance. But one looks in vain for any satisfactory explanation of the above

statement in the Maharshi's writings. What is given is nothing but the familiar facts of our birth and death and the perpetual supply of our natural and spiritual wants,—facts from which an inductive inference of great probability may indeed be drawn and has been drawn by theologians as to our dependence on a higher spirit, but which reveal no necessary truths which can fully satisfy our intellects. However, I must say something as to the source from which the Maharshi has borrowed the term, *átmapratyaya*, and the difference between his interpretation of it and that given by those who originally used it. He admits that he borrows it from the *Mándúkya Upanishad*, which expressly represents the Supreme Being as the object of *átmapratyaya*. But in borrowing it the Maharshi changes its meaning almost radically and denudes it of much of its significance. As this point seems to be a very important one, I shall quote the whole passage in which the term occurs and compare the meaning given to it by the Maharshi with that given to it by Śankaráchárya in his commentary on the *Upanishads*. The *Mándúkya Upanishad* treats of the four states of the self—the self which, either in man or in Nature, it teaches to be one and indivisible. Having spoken of the first three states, namely, the waking, the dreaming, and the profoundly sleeping, it speaks of the fourth, which, according to it, is the highest, in the following words: "*Nántaprajnam na bahihprajnam nobhayatah-prajnam na prajnam náprajnam. Adrishtam avyava-*

háryam agráhyam alakshanam achintyam avyapade-śyam ekátmapratyayasáram prapanchopaśamam śántam śivam advaitam chaturtham manyante sa átmá sa vijneyah." In the first volume of my Devanágar and English edition of the *Upanishads*, I translate the passage thus : "That which is not conscious of internal objects nor of external objects, nor of objects in the middle state, which is not the concentration of know-ledge, which is neither conscious nor unconscious, which is unseen, which cannot be used, which is intangible, undefinable, inconceivable, indescribable, object of the intuition of one self, beyond the five classes of sensible objects, the undifferenced, the good, without a second—that the wise conceive as the fourth aspect. He is the Self, he is to be known." Now, I have quoted the whole passage with its translation, so that you may, if you like, consider it with reference to the context. But we are not directly concerned with the explanation of the whole passage. Our chief concern is with the phrase "*ekátmapratayasáram.*" Both in the lecture refer-red to and in his *Bráhma Dharma*, the Maharshi explains it thus: "*Ekah jagat-káranam Brahmá-stiti átmapratyayah sáram pramánam yasyádhigame tat ekátmapratyayasáram, i. e.,* "The phrase means he for the knowledge of whom there is this sole proof, namely, the soul's belief, that Brahman, the cause of the world, exists." Let us now see how the great commentator, Śankarácharya, explains the phrase. He says : "*Jágradádisthanesveko'yam át-*

metyavyabhichárí yah pratyaya stenánusaraníyam. Athaivaika átmapratyayah sáram pramánam yasya turîyasyádhigame tat turíyam ekátmapratyayasáram." That is, "It is to be followed, *i. e.*, known by the unchangeable belief that in all the states beginning with the waking, this Self is the same, or that transcendent Being is the object of átmapratyaya, for the knowledge of whom átmapratyaya is the sole proof." In my own annotations I give an explanation briefer than though in strict accordance with this. It is:—"*Jágradádi-avasthásu eko'-yam átmá vartate iti pratyaya-vishayam*,—it is the object of the belief that this one Self exists in all the states beginning with the waking." In Śankara's explanation '*átmapratyaya* evidently means, not the self's intuition of a reality distinct from itself, as the Maharshi renders it, but the intuition of or relating to the self, the one indivisible self's consciousness of itself. Whereas the Maharshi's interpretation is dualistic, Śankara's interpretation is monistic; and even a superficial study of the *Mándúkya* is enough to show that Śankara represents the sense intended by the composer of the *Upanishad.* Thus the Maharshi gives the term '*átmapratyaya*' a meaning entirely his own and deprives it of the significance it possesses in the *Upanishads* and in the Vedantic literature which has grown out of their teachings, in which it appears in two other forms, '*asmatpratyaya*' and '*aham-pratyaya*', meaning exactly the same thing as '*átma-*

pratyaya'. In the sense given to it by the Maharshi, it is only an inference from the finite to the Infinite; in the Vedantic sense it is the consciousness of self in its ultimate essence,—a consciousness which is mixed up with error in ignorant minds, but which, in minds fully enlightened, appears in its unalloyed form and is identical with our consciousness of God. I accept the latter sense of the term and shall, in my fourth lecture, show its full significance as the basis of true Theism. I shall show that *átmapratyaya* is not of the nature of an inference from our own consciousness of ourselves as finite beings to a Being entirely distinct from us, but the direct consciousness of a Being transcending time and space and yet constituting the very essence of our conscious existence. In other words, I shall show that *átmapratyaya* is, in its pure and ultimate essence, identical with *Brahmapratyaya*. In the meantime I shall close this lecture with an extract from Śankara's commentary on the *Vedánta Sútras* in which, as you will see, he clearly shows the universal, fundamental and self-evident nature of the intuition of self and its being the basis of all other kinds of knowledge. The passage occurs in his commentary on the seventh aphorism of the third páda, second chapter, of the *Sútras* and is as follows. I shall read every sentence separately with its translation by Professor Thibaut, slightly altered by me here and there.

"*Na hi átmá ágantukah kasyachit*, says Śankara,

"*svayam siddhatvát*". That is, "The Self is not contingent in the case of any person; for it is self-evident."

"*Na hi átmá átmanah pramánam apekshya sidhyati.*"—"The self is not established by proofs of the existence of the self."

"*Tasya hi pratyakshádíni pramánáni asiddha-prameya-siddhaye upádíyante.*"—Perception and other proofs, which are employed in the case of things not proved, but to be proved, are founded on it."

"*Na hi ákásádayah padártháh pramánántarápekshah svayam siddháh kenachit abhyupagamyante.*"—"No one assumes such things as ether and the like as self-evident and needing no proof."

"*Atmá tu pramánádi-vyavahárásrayatvát prágeva pramánádi-vyavahárát sidhyati.*"—"But the Self, being itself the condition of employing proofs and such other things, is accepted as self-evident even before the employment of proofs and such other things."

"*Na cha idrisasya nirákaranam sambhavati.*"—"Nor is it possible to deny such a reality."

"*Ágantukam hi vastu nirákriyate na svarupam.*"—

"For it is only a contingent object that can be denied, and not that which is self-subsistent."

"*Ya eva hi nirákartá tad eva tasya svarupam.*"—"It is the very essence of him who would deny it."

"*Na hi agneraushnyam agniná nirákriyate.*"—"Fire cannot reject its own warmth."

"*Tathá aham idáním jánámi vartamánam vastu aham eva atítam atitarancha ajnásisham aham eva*

anágatam anágatatarancha jnásyámíti atítánágata-vartamána-bhávena anyathá bhavati api jnátabye na jnáturanyathá-bhávo'sti sarvadá-vartamána-bhávatāt."—"Let us take an example. It is I who know what is present. It is I who knew what is past and what is more remotely past. It is I who shall know the future and what is more remotely future. In these cases, though the object of knowledge differs according as it is present, past or future, the knowing subject does not change, for it is always present."

We shall see, as we proceed, that these familiar facts, whose deep significance is concealed by their extreme familiarity, are the revelations of an eternal and infinite Consciousness lying at the root of our lives and at the root of the whole cosmos. May the Supreme Spirit be our guide in our search after him!

LECTURE IV

Revelation of God in Man and Nature : the Metaphysics of Theism

I hope you remember the conclusion of our third lecture. By a pregnant quotation from Śankara, I tried to show there, that *átmapratyaya* or the intuition of self is fundamental, self-evident and universal. I also promised there to show by and by, that *átmapratyaya* is, in its pure and ultimate essence, identical with *Brahmapratyaya* or the intuition of God. Now, this is a subject to which you cannot pay too much attention ; and it will be seen that the satisfactoriness or the reverse of the work that lies before us, will depend greatly upon the firm or loose hold you may have of the subject in hand. Let us, therefore, endeavour to understand clearly the characteristics of the intuition of self just enumerated,—its primariness, necessity and universality. By the primary or fundamental character of self-consciousness, it is meant that it is the basis of all other kinds of knowledge and therefore not dependent on any of them. As Śankara says : "The self, being the condition of the employment

of proofs, is self-evident even before the employment of proofs." As it is the self that preceives and reasons —makes perception and reason possible,—its existence is logically prior to perception and reasoning, and it does not wait or need to be established by these proofs. The necessary or self-evident character of self-consciousness is also clear, and it cannot be expressed more clearly than in Śankara's words: "It is not possible to deny such a reality, for it is the very essence of him who would deny it." Descartes, the father of modern European philosophy, found himself capable, at the beginning of the course of philosophical reconstruction started by him, of doubting everything, God and the whole world, but incapable of doubting his own self; for even the act of doubting it implied existence. Doubt itself implies the doubter; and so Descartes expressed the fundamental and self-evident character of self-consciousness in the well-known proposition, '*Cogito, ergo sum*'—'I think, therefore I exist'—which, though put in the form of an argument, is not really so, but the expression of a self-evident, fundamental truth. Its self-evidence and primariness, you will see, are not really different characteristics, but the same characteristic expressed in two ways. Nor is its universality really a different characteristic; for it simply means that the intuition of self lies at the basis of all forms of thought and knowledge and is therefore common to all rational beings. I would particularly draw your attention to this characteristic of self-consciousness. The fact asserted

is that, whether we see or hear, smell, taste or touch, remember, imagine or reason, we know our own self as the subject of these acts. In other words, all objects of knowledge and thought appear related to us as known or thought of. You will see that the proposition I am stating is really an identical proposition, repeating in the predicate what is already implied in the subject, and therefore cannot but be a true proposition. But the fact is that to unreflective people, it does not seem to be so plain and its truth seems far from being apparent. It seems that in much of our knowing and thinking we forget ourselves and that it is only in reflective moods that we are aware of ourselves as knowers and thinkers. But this is really based on a misconception. It is indeed true that in unreflective moods the *proposition*, 'I know' or 'I think', is not distinctly before our minds, but that the *fact* of our being subjects is, in a more or less indistinct form, present to our minds in every act of knowing or thinking, is evident; for unless it were so, unless we knew ourselves related as subjects to every object known by us, we could not, after the act of knowing, bring ourselves into relation to it in our reflective moods. We can remember only that which we know, we can recognise only what we cognise; and so, if, for instance, you had really forgotten yourselves when you heard my third lecture, you could not now remember, as you actually do, that you did hear it. The very fact that you now remember yourselves as the hearers of

the lecture, shows that you knew yourselves then as its hearers. All knowledge, therefore, contains, either explicitly or implicitly, self-knowledge, the knowledge of the self as the subject or knower. This self-knowledge may be associated with various wrong notions about the nature of the self; but that does not make the fundamental knowledge of self as the knowing principle any the less real. In ignorant minds the real nature of the self may lie concealed, as it were, under various objects wrongly identified with it, as the real nature of a sword is hidden by the sheath which encloses it. But that does not invalidate the original *átmapratyaya* which accompanies all these mistaken identifications. Vedantic philosophers, including the composers of the *Upanishads*, have taken the trouble of enumerating the various gross or subtle objects with which we, at successive stages of our spiritual progress, identify the self, and have also taught us the way to finding out the error of such ignorant identifications. At the lowest stage of spiritual progress, they say, we naturally identify the self with the gross body, the organism which is built up with the materials eaten by us. This they call *annamaya kosha*, the nutrimental or material sheath. At the next higher stage we identify the self with the vital principle, the principle which lies at the root of our respiration, digestion, locomotion and such other phenomena. This they call *pránamaya kosha*, the vital sheath. At the third higher stage we consider our passing sensations and ideas,

or a conceived substratum of these, as our self. This sensory or substratum of sensations they call *monomaya kosha*, the sensuous or mental sheath. At the next or fourth stage, we consciously bring all sensations under general ideas and conceive of an organ which we call *buddhi* or the understanding, as the seat of these ideas. This *buddhi* or *vijnána* is called by our philosophers *vijnánamaya kosha*, the intellectual sheath. Our pleasurable emotions, especially the emotions arising from communion with God, are conceived to be the fifth involucrum of the self and is called *ánandamaya kosha*, the beatific sheath. In each higher stage of spiritual life represented by these sheaths, we identify the self with a subtler and subtler object and ascribe to it a higher and higher function Each higher sheath, therefore, is a truer representation of the self than the lower. But as each of them is an object characterised by being known, and is not self-knowing, none represents the true self, which is a self-knowing subject and not the object of knowledge to any one else than itself. Thus we see that, though we may be far from true self-knowledge,—knowledge of the real nature of the self, though we may identify our self with objects more or less misrepresenting it and so far hiding its true character, yet we never lose sight of it altogether, but refer every piece of knowledge, of whatever kind it may be, to a knowing principle constituting our very self.

Now, let us proceed and try to see what is involved

in this primary fact of the self knowing itself in knowing and thinking of every object, or in other words, of every object of knowledge and thought appearing as related to the self as known or thought of by it. It seems to us, on a superficial view, that things come into relation with the self in our acts of knowing and then pass out of this relation and continue as realities independent of knowledge when they are no more before our senses. But on a closer view it will be seen that even when they are absent from our body and our senses we continue to think of them as still related to our self—as still the objects of its knowledge. Whether we are right in thinking so or not, is not the question now; the question is whether we necessarily think so or not—whether this mode of thinking is or is not a fundamental law of thought. You will see that it is really so. You may imagine as many changes in the objects known by you as you please when they are absent from your senses; but you will see that you must think of all these changes as *known* changes, and that the original object, however changed in character, must be thought of as unchanged in one essential character—its being an object of knowledge to the self—the same self that you call your own. At the end of this lecture you may, as you really will, imagine this *mandir* as unoccupied by any human being, as a darkened hall with the lights put out and as dead-still, with no sound vibrating through it, and so on. You may even represent it as shaken or reduced to fragments by

a sudden earthquake or burnt to ashes by an unexpected conflagration. But, in whatever form you think of it as existing, you must, by an inexorable necessity, think of that form as related as a known object to your self. It may seem, at first thought, that we are required to think of *some* self or other, as knowing the object; but you will see, if you dive deep into the matter, that whatever other characteristics you may be required to ascribe to the subject in relation to which the object in question must be thought of, you cannot dissociate it from yourself. With the other characteristics you may ascribe to it, you must nevertheless think of it as your inmost self—as that which makes it possible for you to know the object when it is presented to your senses. We see, then, that, however unreasonable it may sound, we are compelled, by a fundamental law of thought, to universalise our self, the self which each of us calls his own. We not only see that our self is present as the witness of every object and every event which is presented to us, but we are forced, by an inexorable necessity of thought, to think of this self as the witness of every object, however remote it may be from our senses, and of every event, even those that are far removed in time, both past and future, from our brief span of life. We see that we can, with more or less ease, discount the five sheaths enumerated above in thinking of the facts of the world. We can think of things as not near our bodies. We can think of our organisms as not formed at all

when yet the world was full of an infinite variety of things. We can think of us as not breathing, digesting or performing other vital functions. We can think of ourselves as not experiencing any sensations, *i. e.*, not as existing at all as sentient beings. We need not even think of ourselves as distinct intelligences, taking up the facts of the universe piecemeal and trying to understand them. We may discount the thought of such intelligences experiencing the joys arising out of knowledge and devotional exercises. But what we cannot discount is the self implied in all these things and thoughts. We are forced to represent it as the one unchangeable witness of the universe and of our commerce with it as individual and changeful intelligences. All that makes us finite beings, as limited in time, space and power, we do not universalise. We do not universalise our bodies, our senses, our thoughts and emotions, not even our ideas as passing events. But each of us thinks that his inmost self is something universal, existing everywhere and at all times. As each of us thinks his own self to be universal, it will be seen that we really think one undivided universal Self as existing at the root of all our separate individualities. In so far as we habitually identify our individuality with our self, in so far as the term 'self' is appropriated to the mind or understanding distinct in each of us, the proposition that there is a universal and permanent witness of the world, and that it exists in each of us as our

inmost self, seems to be a most absurd one. Whether it is really so absurd as it seems, or there is really, in each of us, something transcending time and space and constituting the basis of our conscious life, we must see by and by. What I have already said is not, I am aware, sufficient to convince the intellect and make all doubts and misgivings impossible. But what I claim to have already shewn is that, however absurd the above proposition may seem to us, it is really a necessity of thought. If you really understand it, you will see that it governs all our thoughts about the world. We cannot represent the world to our mind otherwise than as the permanent object, in all its changes, of the very self which we call our own. It is only in so far as we live without reflection that we seem to think otherwise. Deep reflection, a close analysis of our ideas, cannot but detect this necessity of thought. This necessity can be logically proved, if it is not already clear, by showing that the current belief that the world exists without any necessary relation to the self, actually involves a contradiction. Things appear to us as known—as related to our knowing self. We do not know them in any other character than as known. They are *known things* to us, and we can think of them only as we know them, *i. e.*, we can think of them only as *known things*. Even he who says that he believes things as existing unknown—unrelated to the knowing self—really represents them to his mind as *known* things. It is impossible for him to repre-

sent them in any other character than that in which they have appeared to him. To say, therefore, that things can exist without relation to the self, is to say that known things can exist unknown, which is as palpable as contradiction as any can be. That people thus habitually contradict themselves without knowing that they do so, shows how little they care to analyse their thoughts and learn their true nature and contents. It is really impossible, as I have already said, to think of things otherwise than as known and known to our own self. By the same necessity which compels us to think of things as known even when they are absent from our senses, we are also forced to universalise the self in us and think of it as present to all things. Whether we are right in thinking so or not, we may now proceed to see by closely analysing our knowledge and trying to find out if there *is* or *is not* anything in it that transcends the limitations of space and time.

The common belief—the belief not only of unreflective people, but of many who call themselves philosophers, is that, in knowing the world we know ourselves as so many finite subjects, as selves not only distinct from, but essentially unrelated to, the world we know. But the fact is that it is only from the standpoint of an Infinite Self, only as sharing in the life of such a Self, that we can be and do actually become the subjects of knowledge. In every act of knowing we indeed distinguish ourselves from the objects known. In knowing the book before me I

know that it is distinct not only from my body, but from my very self. The book is not I, nor am I the book. The book seems to limit my existence and I seem to limit its. I seem to be wholly excluded from the book and it seems to be wholly excluded from me. But the fact is that while this distinction of subject and object really limits the object, the subject is not limited thereby. The distinction is the subject's own making; it is the source of the distinction and it transcends or overlaps the limitation implied in it. While the object is known and can be thought of only as known and is thus essentially limited by the subject, the subject knows both the object and itself. Though distinguishing itself from the object, it finds the object within its own sphere of existence—comprehended within its own higher, broader life. The same act—and by 'act' here I mean not a change but a permanent fact or function—the same act by which it distinguishes itself from the object, also necessarily relates the object to itself, for the object apart from the subject is an abstraction and not a concrete reality. Analyse the object into its subtlest parts, into the most inpalpable atoms, if you like, and you will find that you cannot know or think of them except as known, except as comprehended within the sphere of the self's knowledge. Consider every one of the qualities which either common sense or science discovers in it, and you will see that every one of them is included in the same manner in the self's comprehensive sphere of consciousness. Colour

is what is seen, and unseen colour is an abstraction. Sound is that which is heard, and unheard sound is an absurdity. Smell and taste are what are smelt and tasted, and are meaningless without relation to the smeller and taster. Heat and cold, as felt by us, are possible only to a conscious suject of sensations. Again, if in being resisted by an inert object like the book before me, or a moving object like the wind, you imagine that there is something in the object which resists you, which puts forth efforts like yourself, you will see that you can form no conception of it except as an active will, as similar to what in you puts forth efforts, and therefore closely related to and, as you will see by and by, essentially one with yourself. In knowing an object, therefore, we know, not anything independent of, anything excluded from, the self which knows it, but something essentially and necessarily related to it. In knowing the object, the subject does not accidentally come into contact with an alien reality, as the common notion is, but it really finds or discovers itself in it as its very life and support. In no act of perception, therefore, do we know a mere object,—something independent of and unrelated to the knowing subject; or a mere individual subject, unrelated to or apart from the object. In every perception, the whole concrete reality known is a subject-object or an indivisible Spirit which distinguishes itself from the object and at the same time comprehends it within its sphere of consciousness, This Spirit is not a mere subjective Spirit, one confined

to the body, but it is in every object that we know. When knowing objects, we know a Spirit which is both in our bodies and in the objects, a Spirit which is both subjective and objective, which is both our own self and the self of the universe. It is not through any process of inference, but by direct perception, in the act of perceiving what we call material objects, that we know the Spirit of the world. We know him in every act of perception, but recognise him not, because our wrong notions of objects, not the objects themselves, hide him or seem to hide him from us. When these wrong notions are dispelled by true philosophical knowledge, God reveals himself as the direct object of, or rather the subject-object, the concrete Reality known in, every act of knowledge. What these wrong notions are, will, I hope, be somewhat clear to you now. Now, if the self which is in us not only knows objects, but is also in them, as we have seen, as their very life and support, as in fact constituting them by making possible every element or quality of which they are composed, we are evidently wrong in supposing them to exist, when absent from our senses, independently of the Spirit in which, in essential relation to which, they appear in our acts of knowing them. Since our acts of knowing them, though transient and intermittent, reveal an *essential* relation between objects and the Spirit which knows them and is manifest in them, the necessary inference from this fact is that, even when absent from our senses, they continue to exist in that

very Spirit in relation to which they appear. This book, for example, which now reveals a Spirit in all its parts and qualities, must, according to the inference just drawn, be believed as still continuing to exist in the same Spirit when it is removed from my presence and locked up in a desk. As we have already seen, our original intuition of self anticipates this inference, and we now see the rational basis of our intuitive belief. But current notions contradict both the intuitive belief and the inference which substantiates it. When I take away my body and senses from contiguity with the book, I seem to take away from it also the Spirit which knows it and in relation to which it appears. The book as locked up in the desk seems quite unrelated to the self which is in me, and my self, the self in my body, seems, in its moods of abstraction from the world, to be a purely subjective spirit having no essential relation to the objective world. There seems to be even a palpable contradiction in supposing that, when absent from my senses, objects continue to exist in the self which I call mine. It seems to assert that I perceive them when actually I do not perceive them.

This difficulty and seeming contradiction disappears when we observe the fact that the self which we call our own, which makes us knowing beings, and which is at the same time known as the life and support of the objects which we know, appears in two distinct though related forms. It appears as a single, indivisible, objective and universal Spirit,

unembodied and diffused in or containing the world, and as a subjective spirit, distinct in each individual, using our bodies and senses and identified with our individual thoughts and feelings. The difficulty or apparent contradiction in question arises from our exclusive attention to the subjective or individual aspect of the self and our ignoring its objective and universal aspect. As our perception of the world always takes place through our senses and intellect, we identify knowledge with sensuous or mere intellectual experience and we identify the reality which appears in knowledge with the instruments of its self-revelation; that is, with the sensorium and the understanding. We are indeed correct enough in holding to the reality of our individual existence. Our limitations are real enough. The distinction of our individual lives from the life of the universe is evident from all points of view. How little we know and how little we share in the grand march of natural events! But the little knowledge of Nature and the little contact we have with her are sufficient revelations of the universal character of the Spirit which at once makes us knowing beings and presents Nature to us in essential relation to itself. This universal, objective, and therefore non-sensuous and, if the expression may be allowed, non-intellectual character of spirit will be more evident if we somewhat closely examine our knowledge of time and space,—the two forms in which Nature is presented to us and which constitute our limita-

tions as individual beings. It will then be seen that while these forms are real as limitations of Nature and of our individual existence, they at the same time unmistakably reveal the infinite and eternal nature of the Spirit which makes the existence of both Nature and ourselves possible. Taking up the book before me again as example, let us then see what our knowledge of time and space testify to as regards the nature of the Spirit which is alike in it and in my body. Space is externality: the book before me is outside my body, and every part of the book is outside every other part. Space is, in other words, the relation of *here* and *there*: the book is here, the benches whereon you are seated are there. If you look closely into the matter, you will see that the externality and the relation of *here* and *there* involved in space implies as its correlative, as its very basis and possibility, the non-externality, the unspatiality, if the expression may be pardoned, of the Spirit which knows it. The Spirit could not know space, could not know the relations involved in it, if it were itself in space. The Spirit, indeed, appears to be here, in the body, and the book to be there, outside the body. But the Spirit's appearing to be *in* the body is due to its mistaken identification with the body and its functions. In reality, as the knowing principle, it is neither here nor there, neither internal nor external, not identified with any particular object of its knowledge. In another sense, it is both here

and there, internal to and identified with everything it knows; that is to say, it holds everything in relation to itself, it comprehends all in its sphere of consciousness. Spirit, therefore, transcends space: it is not external to anything and nothing is external to it. Space or the relation of externality, of *here* and *there*, does not enter into its true or inner life; it is a relation obtaining only among things when they are conceived in abstraction from their relation to Spirit, and is, therefore, considered as *máyik* or *vyávahárik* by our Máyávádi philosophers. I do not call it so; but I would wish it to be distinctly seen that it has no place in the concrete reality of Spirit as it comprehends everything in its all-inclusive grasp. In every perception of space, therefore, in every perception of one object as external to another, we realise the knowing Self as non-external, as transcending space, as including both the related objects. In other words, we know the Self as the unifying, concretising principle holding together the diversity and discreteness implied in space. We cannot but think of the various parts of space as included in one all-comprehending space and the Self revealed in all things as holding together all things and all divisions of the spatial world, however far from one another, in the indivisible unity of its consciousness. The common notion of distinct spirits as existing in different bodies, is, therefore, correct only in the sense of distinct manifestations or reproductions of the same universal, infinite and all-comprehending Self in relation

to different bodies, sensories and intellects. It is not correct in the sense of different spirits excluding and quite independent of each other and having no essential relation with Nature. The current notion of Nature as essentially independent of Spirit, and as coming into contact with it only in our transient and intermittent acts of perception, must be characterised as so much practical Atheism, the result of habitual thoughtlessness, of mad absorption in worldly pursuits and blindness to the deeper essence and relations of things. Deep and close insight into the nature of things reveals, as we have seen, an infinite and indivisible Spirit as the real object of every act of knowledge.

Coming now to our perception of time, we shall see, by an analysis similar to what has already been given, that it involves the knowledge of an eternal Self, a Self without beginning and without end, with ideas unchangeable and eternal like itself. Just as we could not know space if we were mere limited objects and had not the Infinite as our *antarátmá*, inmost Self, so it can be shown that we could not know time if we were mere creatures of time and had not the Eternal, the Unborn, the Undying and the Omniscient as the very basis of our conscious life. Time is the relation of *before* and *after* between events. Events cannot take place without being related as before and after one another; and *before* and *after* are unmeaning without reference to events. In other words, "timeless events" and "eventless times" are both unmeaning phrases. But the self which knows an

event *A*, for example, as before the event *B*, is not before or after any. When *A* as an event is past, the self knowing it must retain it as an idea and relate it to *B* before *B* can be called successive to *A*. In the same manner *A* and *B* as first and second must be retained as ideas in the knowing self and brought into relation to *C* before it can be called the third of the series. Thus while events pass, the self which makes events and series of events possible does not pass, does not flow in the current of time, but shows itself to be above time. If it were in time, if it were identified with any particular event or series of events, it could not know events. What is, by its very nature, passing, cannot know itself as such. The knowledge or knower of events cannot be an event or a series of events. Our perception of time or successive events, therefore, involves the realisation of our inmost Self as beyond time, eternai, unborn and undying. The latter fact is not an inference from the former. The one is correlative to the other and is known at once. Every perception of time is a consciousness of the knowing self as timeless. The vagueness of the consciousness is due to the obscurity of vision induced by current notions about the transiency, the apparent birth and death, of the soul,—notions which are the result of that habitual materialism which proceeds from superficial thinking. That we begin to know at a particular time, is not, indeed, an unmeaning proposition any more than that we are beings limited in space. Just as we are limited beings in so far as only a limited portion of

the world in space is, at a time, manifested through our limited bodies, sensories and intellects, so has our knowledge a beginning in so far as the eternal Self, lying at the basis of our consciousness, began at a particular time to manifest his eternal ideas through that particular intellect, sensory and organism with which each one of us is specially identified. But this no more makes our inmost and ultimate Self a thing of time than the limitations of space limit that which makes space itself possible. You will see, if you think closely upon the matter, that we must think of the time preceding our birth as necessarily connected with the moment of our birth or the beginning of conscious life in us, and with the time following, namely, our life-time. You will also see that this necessary connection cannot be thought of without thinking of the same Self as the connecting link. *A*, the moment preceding our birth, cannot be thought of as before *B*, the moment of our birth, without thinking of the same Self as present to both the events. In the same manner, all events or series of events in the world must be thought of as bound together in a necessary link, the one following the other in an irreversible order, and an eternal unchangeable Spirit must be thought of as the basis of this union, the Witness of all the events included in this unbroken chain of phenomena. This chain, again, must be thought of as without any absolute beginning and absolute end. Particular series of events, for example the creation of particular systems or the commencement of particular

cycles, may have both beginning and end. But the whole cosmos as a single series can have neither a beginning nor an end. To say that it can have a beginning, an event which is absolutely the first of all events, is to say that there was time before it, but no event, which is absurd; and to say that it can have an absolute end, is to say that there can be an event with time after it, but no event occurring in that time, which also is absurd; for, as has already been said, "timeless events" and "eventless times" are both unmeaning phrases. Now, the necessary correlate to this beginningless and endless world-order is a timeless eternal Spirit which, not being any event or series of events, makes all events possible, and which, not being identified with our perishing thoughts and feelings, is, at the same time, the basis of our conscious life, "*Nityo'nityánám chetanashchetanánám*",—the Eternal among non-eternal things, the Consciousness of conscious beings.

Now, the omniscience as well as the omnipresence of God follows directly from what has already been said. It has been shewn that in no act of perception do we know a mere object, "a mere object" being an abstraction, but that in every perception the whole concrete Reality known is a subject-object, an indivisible Spirit which, while distinguishing itself from the object, comprehends it within its sphere of consciousness. When this necessary connection between subject and object is remembered, and when it is also remembered that in every act of knowledge the

Objective Self manifests itself as our individual self with the objects or ideas necessarily and indissolubly related to it, then it is at once seen that, in the original Self there can be no such thing as either the appearance or disappearance of ideas, as either coming to know something or ceasing to know it. Knowledge, to it, must be thought of not as an act or a series of acts, but as an eternal possession. According to the distinction well-known in the Vedanta Philosophy, we must conceive of the Supreme Self as not a *jnání*, a knower, one whose knowing is an act, beginning and ending, but *jnánam*, absolute knowledge itself. What we call perceptions or acts of knowing, then, are not acts of knowing to the Supreme Self, but are only partial manifestations of its nature as subject-object, as Absolute Spirit, in or as our knowledge, in or as our self. In the same manner, the disappearance of objects from our conscious life, our acts of oblivion, can never be the disappearance of them from the Supreme Mind, for objects are not alien realities to it, but are necessarily related to its self-consciousness. Knowledge or perception, therefore, is an act or event only to the individual self, that is, to that partial reproduction of the Supreme Self which each one of us calls his particular self and which we identify with a particular sensory and a particular intellect. To the Supreme, Original Self, knowledge is not a preceptive act, but an eternal timeless fact, forming its very essence. We indeed realise this eternal

essence in every act of perception, but we see that in itself it is not an act. Now, these truths, though I state them briefly on account of the shortness of time at our disposal, will be found, when you deeply think of them, to be indissolubly connected with our self-consciousness, and not mere inferences from more or less uncertain data. They will be found to be substantiated by our daily experience, in which we find that facts and objects, constantly disappearing from our individual experience and wholly submerged in the hours of dreamless sleep, appear again as identical facts and objects, suffused all over, as it were, with our self-consciousness, and thereby proving that, in our hours of forgetfulness, they exist in the infinite and eternal Self which is at once the Self of the universe and our inmost Self, the life and support of every finite soul.

The most primary revelation of God in the soul and in Nature is, then, the revelation of an infinite, all-comprehending, all-knowing and eternal Spirit as the very truth of Nature and the life of every finite being. This, I say, is his most primary revelation to us, proving what are called by western philosophers his metaphysical attributes, and by our Vedantic philosophers his '*svarupalakshanam*', his essential nature, *Satyamjnánamanantam Brahma*, God as the true, the knowing and the infinite. We have yet to consider his moral attributes, his relation to us as having an ethical nature, and to see how the various special sciences—physical, biological and moral—con-

firm the evidence which the human soul and Nature, as an object in time and space, furnish us as to the Supreme Being. This latter subject I intend to take up in my fifth lecture. In the meantime I beg you most earnestly to think deeply on the points dealt with in this lecture. You will find some of these treated of at considerable length in my Bengali treatise named *Brahmajijnásá*, its English translation, and my *Evidences of Theism.* May the Supreme Self reveal himself to every earnest soul!

LECTURE V

Theistic Presuppositions of Science

We have seen in our fourth lecture how Mind and Nature, in their relation as subject and object, reveal a Conscious Unity which at once constitutes this relation and transcends the limitation implied in it, and how our knowledge of time and space also involves the knowledge of an infinite and eternal Consciousness in relation to which all things in time and space exist, and which is also the inmost self of all intelligent beings. The method we employed in arriving at these truths is called the metaphysical—the method of a science which claims to be the science of all sciences, for it deals with the fundamental principles of all special sciences—the principles underlying all knowledge and reality. As we saw in the last lecture, in all acts of knowing the concrete reality known is a subject-object—an indivisible Consciousness with objects necessarily related to it. In no act of knowing, as we saw, do we know a mere object unrelated to a subject or a mere subject unrelated to an object, a finite subject

unrelated to the Infinite or a bare, colourless Infinite without any relation to things finite. Now, it is this essential relation of the object to the subject and the finite to the Infinite which it is the special province of Metaphysics to show forth and on a practical recognition of which all religion, truly so called, is based. But it will be seen that all special sciences—sciences dealing with particular things or particular aspects of things—are, in so far as they retain their speciality, in so far as they avoid dealing with the general principles of all sciences and do not intrude upon the subject-matter of other sciences, based on an abstraction of this fundamental relation. They speak of objects as if they were realities independent of a subject, and of finite intelligences as if they were distinct realities unconnected with one another and independent of the Supreme Intelligence or God. This abstraction is, indeed, necessary for the existence and elaboration of the special sciences. Their function of finding out the qualities and relations of special things would not be helped, but would rather be hampered, by constant references to metaphysical truths—to their relation to the Supreme Reality of which they are parts or manifestations. But what is unfortunate is, that not only the unreflective and unscientific mass, but many men of science also are not aware that the special sciences proceed upon an abstraction, and that really there is only one absolute science, the science of the Supreme Reality or God, and all special sciences are only ramifications of that one absolute

science—all dealing with relative truths—truths that rise into absoluteness only when they are looked at in the light of the one Absolute Truth. Most scientific men mistake the abstraction of objects from the Mind and of the finite from the Infinite as a real separation, and do not feel the need of rounding off the special sciences by showing their necessary relation to Metaphysics or Absolute Science. They do not see that the knowledge imparted by the special sciences does not amount to real or absolute knowledge unless it is seen in relation to the knowledge of the one Absolute Reality which shines through all. Now, this attitude of scientific men is, in these days, doing the greatest harm to religion. The world is happily growing more and more scientific day after day. Scientific methods, the methods of observation and generalisation, are being applied to all departments of Nature and Society. Blind dependence on authority is giving way to free and unbiased thought in all concerns of life. Religion, which was the last human concern to rest upon authority, is itself tending to become a science, and has already become so to some choice minds. But to the great majority of reflective men it is not yet a science, and such men seem to swing between two extremes. One portion seems still to be trying to feel after a foundation of faith independent of science, while the other has run to the opposite dogmatism of supposing the special sciences as sources of absolute knowledge and of rejecting as superstition everything that does not come within their

sphere. People of this class naturally look upon the truths of religion as no truths at all, and can be won back over to religion only if they can be shown that the principles which guide scientific thought, commonly so-called, are not fundamental principles leading to true or absolute knowledge,—that they need to be re criticised and seen in relation to principles which are really fundamental, and that when this is done, it is seen that the sciences, instead of being opposed or indifferent to religion, instead of being sceptical or agnostic as regards religious truths, are really so many revelations of God. This will be clear if we examine the basal conceptions of the various sciences, —the fundamental principles which they take for granted in their investigations of the phenomena of Nature and Mind. Such an examination will show that these conceptions are really metaphysical and are direct attestations or expressions of the truths of religion. Now, our proposed survey of the fundamental conceptions of science must necessarily be a very brief and hurried one, as it must be limited by the limited scope of this lecture. But I think it will give you sufficient food for reflection and afford hints which, if developed by thought and study, will convince you that the agnostic or sceptical aspect of modern science is a false appearance, the result, not of true scientific insight, but rather the absence of it on the part of scientific men, due rather to a circumscribed view of the nature and requirements of science than to a truly scientific vision of Mind and Nature.

Now, the sciences so far recognised as such may be divided into three main groups, the Physical, the Biological and the Moral. In the first-mentioned group are such sciences as Physics, Chemistry, Geology and Astronomy; the second includes Botany, Physiology, Zoology and the like; and the third comprises Psychology, Logic, Ethics, Sociology, Politics, etc. The fundamental conceptions employed in the physical group are those of substance, casuality and reciprocal action; those used in the biological are life and growth; and those on which the moral sciences are based are individuality and social unity. Now I shall show, by a brief examination of these various conceptions, that they are really metaphysical and presuppose the fundamental truths of religion.

Let us begin, then, with the conception of substance. This idea implies that all changes are changes of something which remains unchanged and undiminished, that all changes are changes in form or appearance, but that what undergoes or presents the changes, remains always identical with itself. For an example we need not go far. The book in my hand consists of materials which have gone through many changes. The paper it is made of assumed its present shape after many transformations, and it may still go through many more. I might now, if I were so minded, put it into the fire of the light before me, and it would, in the course of a few minutes, be reduced to ashes. How great would be the change it

would then undergo! Both its visible and tangible shape would be changed. But we should still believe that the substance of which it is composed would remain quite undiminished in quantity and identical with itself. Even if we supposed the matter it consisted of to be so rarefied as to be invisible and intangible, we should still believe it to remain undiminished in quantity and identical in its essential qualities. Now, what is that persistent element in it which under so many changes of form and appearance we believe to be identical with itself? It is plain that it is nothing sensuous,—no presentation or appearance to sense, for we suppose all its sensuous appearances as changeable. It is true that, under all its changes of form, we still ascribe to it the essential quality of occupying space and the power of offering resistance; but as we cannot conceive space except as filled with visible or tangible materials, and as the power of offering resistance is nothing like the sensible state or feeling we call resistance, the essential properties we ascribe to material substance are not actually sensuous qualities. We conceive it as a mere capability of presenting sensuous appearances under certain conditions, and not as actually possessing sensuous qualities. In using the conception of substance, therefore, science goes beyond sense and beyond its proper method of observation and generalisation. No sensuous experience and no amount of observation, however vast and searching, can give us the idea of substance; and yet no experience and

no observation is possible without it. It is a pure, non-sensuous conception brought by the mind itself to experience as one of its essential constituents. It is in fact a fundamental principle of thought, an essential form of the mind's own activity, and necessarily implies the existence of a knowing permanent Self. It is really the form in which the Self presents changes to itself. The unchanged or unchangeable is the necessary correlate of change. An object cannot be conceived as changed and at the same time remaining identical with itself without something in it being thought of as unchanged. But form as changing and substance as remaining unchanged again imply an unchangeable Consciousness to which they are presented in mutual correlation. All scientific thought, therefore, involves, as its necessary implication, the truth of an eternal Consciousness to which Nature is essentially related. If men of science doubt or profess ignorance of this truth, they so far fall short of true scientific insight and prove themselves incapable of working out the principles of science up to their ultimate logical issues.

This will be seen even more clearly if we examine the conception of causality, the most important conception employed in scientific investigations. The causal law is, that every change is related to something from which it follows necessarily, that is, given which, it must follow. Now, it would be going much beyond my proposed limits to discuss here the various theories

of causation and their bearing on the problem before us; but a brief discussion of at least two of them cannot be avoided in dealing with the special subject in hand. You will see that as it is not a thing considered as permanently in space, but a change, something that takes place in time, that we are called upon to account for, the cause we seek must be related to the effect *in time*; or in other words it must be antecedent to the effect and therefore itself a change. As we have seen in the fourth lecture, every change must be thought of as necessarily related to another change both before and after it, and time must be conceived of as an infinite series of changes without any absolute beginning and absolute end. That every change must be thought of as the change of some substance remaining identical with itself under all changes, we have already seen. That the mere self-identity of a substance, though the generel condition of all changes, cannot account for any particular change, is also clear. The self-identity of water is the general condition of its three states, liquid, solid and gaseous, but for this very reason, it cannot account for any one of these states in particular. Their explanation we must seek in the action of other substances on water. The cause of a change must therefore be another change or series of changes. The theory that a true cause must be a power, and the meaning that properly belongs to 'power,' we shall discuss as we proceed. The current scientific view of cause is a change from which the effect follows necessarily. Now, let us see, by an ex

ample, what this necessity is; and let us ask whence we derive this idea of necessity. If I set this book on fire, you will see it going through a number of transformations. These transformations will follow one another necessarily. When one has taken place, the second *must* follow, and then the third *must* come after the second, and so on. Can you suppose that when I have set fire to one corner of this leaf, the fire may or may not travel further, or that the change of colour in it, its thinning away and the loosening of its parts and the like may or may not take place? You know that these events *must* follow. But this *must*, this necessity, this causal nexus which binds one event to another indissolubly, is just what we do not perceive by any of our senses. What we perceive is only one event following another. Particular sequences, the following of particular events by particular other events, we may observe several times in our life, and we may arrive at generalisations from such observation. But generalisations, however wide, do not amount to or account for necessity. A sequence, however constant, is not the same as a binding link between two events. This binding link is supplied by the Self in us and the Self in nature. The Self, as the conscious, non-sensuous and timeless witness of events, binds them together by the necessity which essentially belongs to its thought. The determination of event by event is really their determination by the Consciousness of which events are manifestations. Inspite of their apparent contingency, events, as manifestations of the

one, self-identical Self, unchangeable in character, are themselves necessary, and present this necessity in their mutal relations. The necessity which we discover in the causal relation is really the self-identical unchangeable character of the Self which manifests itself in events and in their relations. If the Self be symbolically represented by *S* and any two events, causally related, by *a* and *b*, then the judgment, '*b* is determined by *a*', may be said to be really the judgment, '*Sb* is determined by *Sa*,' or '*S* is determined by *S*.' What, on a superficial view, appears to be the determination of one purely sensuous event by another of the same nature, turns out, on a deeper and closer view, to be the determination of the Self by the Self. What scientific men call the uniformity of Nature, and adduce as the reason why the sequences observed by them as so far constant and varied must be absolutely constant and invariable, is really the self-identical and unchangeable nature of the Self and the necessity by which the fundamental principles of thought are characterised. Nature, abstracted from thought, cannot but appear as contingent, and hence the failure of merely physical science to explain the necessity found in the laws discovered by it—a necessity which, nevertheless, it assumes and which really constitutes the value of these laws. The progress of civilisation—the progress made in agriculture, navigation, hygiene, medicine and other departments of life—has all proceeded upon our firm faith in the fixity of the laws of Nature; and yet, if we interrogate Nature

herself as a reality independent of Mind, she really cannot tell us why she should not be to-morrow quite different from what she has been up to this time. But when we endeavour to understand her by light from within, when we look upon her as the manifestation of Spirit, we find that her fundamental laws, which are really the fundamental laws of thought, cannot but be necessary and unchangeable. We thus see that the most important principle of Physical Science, the law of universal causation, is really the revelation of an eternal, unchangeable and self-determining Spirit in Nature. Science, we see, is agnostic or ignorant of God only in its lower or baser mood, when it does not fully know itself, when it does not fully understand the fundamental principles upon which it proceeds. When made to look fully at its own face as reflected in the mirror of true Philosophy, it unavoidably becomes theistic. Even Physical Science, not to speak of the higher sciences, when thus made self-conscious, becomes indistinguishable from Theology or the Science of God.

Now, we shall find a confirmation of what has just been said in a particular theory of causation which has been made much of by some Natural Theologians of England during the last fifty years or so, and which has been used with much effect in recent Bráhma literature. You will find this theory expounded with much fullness in Babu Nagendranáth Chátturji's *Dharmajijnásá*, pt. I, and in my *Roots of*

Faith. It is expounded briefly and in a popular form in my little tract named *Chintákaniká.* The theory interprets the scientific conception of *force* as really *will*, and holds that unconscious or non-conscious force is an impossibility. I have recently given a brief statement of the theory,—brief and at the same time as clear as I could make it—in a little book named *The Religion of Brahman.* I think that statement will serve our purpose as well as any fresh one that I could give now. I quote from p. 11, Chapter II, of the book: "We have seen that self-intuition is involved in perceiving, thinking, feeling and acting. We shall consider its relation to acting somewhat more fully and see what we learn from it about God. It will be seen, when the relation of our actions to our minds is thought upon, that our minds are not only their knowers, but also their originators. When I attend, for instance, to the book before me, and keep my attention fixed upon it, I find that the action owes its origin to me. The same thing happens when I fancy—hold before my mind's eye—the image, say, of a tree or a house, change it as I choose, and at last dismiss it from my thoughts. A similar power is exercised when, on being oppressed by a train of troublesome thoughts or a painful image, I draw away my mind from it and get rid of the pain. When, from purely internal actions, we come out to those in which we come into contact with external objects, we see the same thing, though with a difference. When I lift up one of my

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hands, the movement certainly owes its origin, at any rate its initiation, to me; but it is only my volition or act of willing which comes out directly from me. For the motion of my hand to follow my volition, a number of nerves and muscles must be moved on which I seem to have no direct command; for if they are stiffened by paralysis or some other cause, as they sometimes are, I see I cannot move my limbs. As, however, under ordinary circumstances, I find my hand following my wishes, I must think that my volitions are, by some mysterious means, communicated to the motory nerves and muscles. So, when I act on objects external to my body, when, for instance, I push aside the book before me, the change surely owes its origin to me; but my power in the case is exercised through the medium of my hand and the apparatus by which it is moved. Now, it should be seen that, in all such cases, something that was not, comes to be. The objects moved may be old; the images formed in the mind may be those of existing objects or combinations of such objects; but whether combinations or movements, or their mere reproduction and dismissal,—to whatever terms the changes are reduced—something new, something original, is found in the phenomena. Here, then, is a wonderful power possessed by the human mind,—it is no less a power than that of *creating*,—of bringing existence out of non-existence. This power we call *the will*. It is the mind itself in an active state. It depends, evidently, on two other powers—those of

knowing and desiring. The object to be moved must be known beforehand. A change, either on an external object or on the mind itself, must, previously to its being produced, be thought of and desired. Will, therefore, is necessarily conscious and intending. An unconscious and unintending will is an absurdity.

"Now, having in us this power of originating changes, we cannot but think of such a power behind the changes which we see taking place around us. We believe our fellow-beings as possessing the same power; we endow the lower animals with it; and we people what we call inanimate Nature with innumerable powers, and trace all natural changes to them. We conceive our bodies, with the complex machinery of organs which keeps them alive, as the seats of a Power not our own; and we can imagine no department of Nature,—neither air, water, fire. the vegetable world, the sun, the moon, nor stars—as without some guiding power or other. Now, it is seen that in primitive men, and even in the children of civilized nations, the power of originating changes is invariably associated with knowledge and intention. To the unthinking savage, every object, at any rate every striking object, is the seat of a personality. Even to our advanced Vedic forefathers, Indra, Váyu, Varuna, Agni—the powers which cause the phenomena of rain, air, water and fire—were so many persons who could be addressed and propitiated by their worshippers. And even our own children kick, as conscious offenders, the objects which hurt them.

But we, who have learnt to think methodically, have, by our power of scientific generalisation, reduced all powers in Nature to one single Power. Further, by a process of abstraction, we have denuded the power of originating changes of its necessary accompaniments of knowledge and intention, so that it is no more *will* to us, but only an abstract quality lying at the root of all change. In coming to this way of thinking, we have both gained and lost. We are right, as the modern discoveries of science and philosophy tell us, in so far as we trace all activities in Nature to one single source. We are also right in seeing that it is inconvenient, if not quite incorrect, to call every change in Nature a Divine volition. But we are wrong in thinking, if we actually do so, that an abstraction in thought is an actual division or separation in reality, that a power of origination is possible without thought and intention. Men speak of *force* as something other than *will* and credit it with all change in Nature, not thinking that though we find it convenient to speak of force as an abstract quality, we can form no clear notion of it in our minds apart from knowing and intending will.

"The fact is, that if we were left only with our sensuous perceptions and sensuous images, without the power of looking within and watching the workings of our minds (if such a state of existence were possible), we should have no idea of originating power or force; and for us change would follow change without any causal link to connect them. Force or the power of

origination is neither visible, audible, smellable, tasteable nor tangible; nor is it anything of which a sensuous image can be formed in the mind. It is a power of the mind, and is known only by self-intuition, and self-intuition reveals it as dependent on knowledge and desire. If, therefore, its existence in the external world is to be believed, it must be conceived there as having essentially the same nature as it possesses in us. We may altogether dismiss the idea of an originating power in Nature, thinking it to be an illegitimate projection in Nature of a purely internal experience—the experience of an originating will,—and try to satisfy ourselves with a view of Nature as a series of changes following one another without any causal link. This is what consistent Sceptics like Hume and Comte tried to do, though we do not think they were successful in rooting out such a fundamental intuition as the intuition of power from their minds. But if changes in Nature are at all to be referred to power, it must necessarily be conceived as a Supreme Will,—a knowing, intending and acting Mind. How this thought helps us in feeling the nearness of God—in realising him as living and acting incessantly in and out of us, the reader will think for himself." Now, as to the principle of reciprocity, everything said about causality applies so well to it, that I consider a separate treatment of it as unnecessary.

Coming next, then, to the Biological Sciences, we find that, as in the case of the Physical, these sciences are agnostic not in so far as they are

scientific, but rather in so far as they stop short of being real sciences. Inasmuch as the objects of these sciences are material bodies, they are indeed perfectly justified in applying mechanical principles, the principles of substance and causality, the laws of matter and motion, to them. And we have seen that even these principles, rightly understood, lead us much farther than where ordinary Physical Science stops. But organic matter, as organic, requires, for its proper explanation, principles very different from the mechanical. It is the teleological principle, the principle of final cause or design, which alone can explain organism, with its functions of life, generation and growth. As Kant truly says, "No Newton, we can say with certainty, will ever rise to make intelligible to us, according to mechanical causes, the germination of one blade of grass." Life is a mystery and will ever remain a mystery to the mere mechanist, to him who carefully excludes design from the explanation of the products of Nature. Let us take, for instance, the most prominent characteristic of life, its power of sustaining itself. Inorganic products grow by accretion, by the external addition of one part to another, by one force acting upon another. A vegetable or an animal germ, on the other hand, sustains itself by its own power. External matter is indeed added to it, but this addition is due to its own internal power. In its case, addition is not mere accretion, as in inorganic objects, but assimilation, the turning of external matter to its own

use by the inherent power of the germ. This assimilation itself is a most wonderful process, and is inexplicable on mechanical principles. It involves *selection*, which directly carries *purpose* with it. Every germ assimilates just those materials which favour its growth into the product to which it tends, which is the end of its process of growth; and every finished organism assimilates just what is required for its sustenance, and nothing else. And then, secondly, while in the case of inorganic matter the cause determines the effect, the parts determine the whole, the present determines the future, in the case of organic matter it is the effect which determines the cause, the whole which determines the parts, and the future which determines the present. The seed grows into the tree, with trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits—members which, in their turn, sustain the life of the whole tree and contribute to the production of seeds for the perpetuation of its kind. The animal germ grows into the finished animal body, with its complex system of organs, each devoted to a particular function and all contributing to the life and reproduction of the whole. In such instances, we see that what comes last, the completed organism with its various functions, is potentially contained in the seed or the germ and determines its whole process of life and growth. But this potential or determinant existence of the effect in the cause can mean nothing else than this, that the *idea* or *design* of the effect determines or works in the cause. Either say this

or your explanation of organic phenomena explains nothing. Now, Biological Science avoids teleology or design just in so far as it ignores this fact of the determination of the present by the future, this relation of means and ends in organic phenomena. Its success in doing without the principle of final causes is only in so far as it is assimilated to Physical Science, only inasmuch as it tries to show that the growth and reproduction of organisms can be explained by principles employed in the latter. But organic phenomena refuse to be explained by mechanical principles. The unity of an organism, the relation of its parts as means and ends to one another, its power of sustaining and producing itself, are phenomena which, on mechanical principles, are accidents. Such principles fail to show that an organism is a necessity. Inorganic nature, as it is, may be shown to be the necessary result of the fundamental laws of matter and motion. But this necessity breaks down in the case of organic nature. These laws fail to show why organisms are what they are and not otherwise. So far as they are concerned, therefore, organisms are mere accidents, or in other words, they are inexplicable by mechanical laws and demand a different explanation. If one or two organisms arose here and there in Nature, they might be set down as accidental effects of mechanical laws. But as they constitute a realm by themselves, arising with a constancy and regularity as steady at least as the laws of physical sequence, they clearly defy the

power of these laws to explain them. The constant and regular rise of the most complex and intricate systems, in which their complexity is co-ordinated to unity, in which the parts exist for the whole and the whole for the parts, in which the parts, organs or members are related as means and ends to one another, can be explained only by *purpose.* Exclude purpose from its explanation, and the whole affair wears the aspect of an accident. But the very essence of accident is irregularity. When something happens with an invariable constancy, it passes out of the category of accidents, and its constancy demands a rational explanation. In the case of organic phenomena, this rational explanation cannot be anything but *purpose.* The very nature of organism, as already described, makes mere mechanical explanation unsatisfactory and irrational. As mere phenomena, mere events in time, all phenomena, including human actions, are subject to the laws of universal causation. But so far as the actions of human beings are related to one another, they demand a higher determination, a higher explanation than the mechanical, the merely physical. They require further to be ascribed to purpose and free-will. Similar is the case with the phenomena of organic nature. Their very nature proves a higher determination than that by merely physical causes. They have to be traced to the designing will of a Being above Nature. The proof in the latter case is not a bit less strong than in the former.

If we know the minds of our fellow-beings by examining the nature of their actions, not less surely do we know Mind in Nature by the same method. You will find this point clearly put and dwelt on at some length in Babu Nagendranath Chaturji's *Dharmajijnásá*, pt. I, where you will also find numerous illustrations of design in Nature. Dr. James Martineau's *Study of Religion* is also a very helpful book on the Design Argument. I content myself with a brief statement of the argument in the way I conceive to be the best and pointing out its place in the system of Theistic Evidences. I think that, from the standpoint of science, it is organic nature which directly calls for the teleological principle as its only rational explanation; and I have, therefore, exhibited it as the real basis of the biological sciences. But we have now to see that even according to the scientific method this principle is applicable to inorganic matter also. In a broad sense, the whole world is an organism, its various parts related to one another as means and ends and all serving the purposes of life and mind. The teleological nature of what we call inorganic matter becomes evident if we see its relation to organic beings. Air in itself, for instance, may seem to be purposeless, to be explicable by mere chemical laws; but chemistry fails to explain it when we contemplate its relation to life and living beings. Is the relation of air to the lungs and the vital functions of animals merely fortuitous? Can any mechanical laws even remotely explain this

relation? Does any conceivable explanation satisfy Reason except the one that ascribes the relation to Design? The same remark applies to the relation of light to the eye, of sound to the ear, of food and drink to the digestive organs,—in fact to the relation of inorganic nature as a whole to organic beings. Is this relation, with the various ends of organic beings systematically served by it, accidental, purposeless? If it cannot be explained by the laws of matter and motion with which the physical sciences deal, it must be either accidental or purposive; and as the first of these suppositions is excluded by the constant and systematic nature of the relation in question, the only rational explanation of it is that it is due to the will of a conscious, intending Being of transcendent power and wisdom to whom Nature, both organic and inorganic, is subject.

We now come to the third and last group of the sciences, the mental and moral. The abstraction on which the inductive sciences, as at present conceived, are based, is nowhere so patent as in this final group. The science of mind, as at present taught, takes for granted, if only as a supposition, that the individual mind can be known and made the subject matter of science apart from the Infinite Mind. To many writers on Psychology, this supposition is unfortunately not a mere supposition, but a dogma, an agnostic creed which they undertake to defend with elaborate arguments. To many others, it is a convenient plea for avoiding discussions, more or less theological

or metaphysical, in which they feel no interest and on which they do not like to pronounce any judgment. Yet the truth is that these writers, almost at every turn in their treatment of their science, make statements and admissions which are nothing but disguised confessions of faith in the Infinite Mind. In my fourth lecture, I have already shown, by an analysis of knowledge, that we cannot know the subject or the object, the individual or the universal soul, in abstraction from each other, and that in every act of knowing the concrete reality known is a subject-object, a spirit which has both a finite and an infinite aspect, and which is both our own self and the self of the universe. On the present occasion, I shall particularly draw your attention to what may be called the very fundamental assumption on which Empirical Psychology is based, the assumption, namely, that there is a sub-conscious region in which mental facts, sensations, ideas, judgments, etc., exist when they are absent from our consciousness,—the conscioussness of individuals. You will see that Psychology cannot do without this assumption. In the individual, knowledge shines only intermittently. Every moment we have command of only a very small stock of ideas. The rest of our ideas,—those even which we have already acquired, remain behind, in the background of our consciousness, from which they come to light and in which they disappear again and again. Our mental life resembles a basin erected round a perpetual spring, a basin in which

the water rises and collects awhile, and from which it again disappears, repeating this process continually. It resembles such a basin rather than a canvas on which images are permanently painted and are always visible. In profound, dreamless sleep, as you know, our conscious life becomes a perfect blank, even self-consciousness, the basis of all other forms of consciousness, being suspended. Now, here is the difficulty of Psychology as a mere empirical science, as a science of mere phenomena and their laws. Other sciences professedly treat of their objects without any reference to the relation which they may have to the mind. Not so Psychology. Its very object is consciousness. It professes to deal only with conscious phenomena and the laws of their combination and association. And yet these phenomena are found to be only fitful visitants of the field which Psychology traverses—the field of individual consciousness. Ever and anon they disappear from this field and enter a region of which this science, as at present conceived, professes to know nothing. A region beyond consciousness is indeed a perfect blank to the science of consciousness. Conscious phenomena, when they cease to be conscious, are indeed nothing to mental science properly so called, and the modern science of the mind, if it were consistent, would be speechless about conscious phenomena as soon as they left the region of individual consciousness. But in that case it would cease to be a science, and so, naturally enough, it does not like to commit

suicide in this fashion. Hence it lives, and lives at the cost of consistency with itself. It speaks of conscious phenomena becoming unconscious, existing in a region of sub-consciousness and emerging from it again as self-same conscious phenomena. But this is so much pure nonsense, seeming to be sense, because it is continually spoken by thinkers and writers who can think clearly and write cleverly on certain things, but who lack the deepest and the truest insight into things of the mind. The fact is, if you consider your individuality to be the only thing you know, and think that you know nothing of a universal, ever-waking, all-knowing Mind in which your individuality is contained, then, to be consistent, you ought to say, as soon as a mental fact passes out of your individual consciousness, that it has entirely ceased to be, and that it is impossible for it to revive or re-appear. When, for instance, you forget this lecture hall, you should say that the idea perishes once for all and any recurrence or return is impossible for it. In losing it, you lose, as it were, a part of yourself, a part of your conscious life, for it is suffused with or constructed by your self-consciousness. As your individual consciousness exhausts your mental life, you cannot imagine your lost idea as hidden in a corner of your mind for a while and coming back to light again. The only consistent course of thinking for you, then, is to think, when you forget your idea, that it is lost irrecoverably. Whatever ideas may enter your mind after its loss can

be only fresh, new ideas,—belonging to a different period of time and therefore numerically different phenomena. But you know that you cannot keep up this consistency. After the lapse of a few moments or after a few hours' oblivion, the idea of the hall re-appears to your mind, and you know surely that it is the same idea that occurred to your mind before. You find that it is suffused, pervaded or constructed through and through, with your self—the self which knew it before and persists till now,—that it is the lost part of your self which is come back. But it could not come back unless it existed during the time that it was absent from your individual consciousness. And in what other form could it exist than in a conscious form—as an idea? An idea existing unthought of is as plain a contradiction in terms as any can be. You are therefore forced to admit that your individuality—your conscious life moment after moment—is not sufficient in itself, is not self-subsistent, but that your ideas, your whole conscious life, must be contained in a Mind which indeed is essentially one with what you call your individual mind, but which is higher than your individuality, for it never forgets anything and never sleeps. Now, it has always seemed to me rather strange, ladies and gentlemen, that this plain fact, namely, that the individual mind is not self-sustained, but lives, moves and has its being in the Universal Mind—a truth which was so plain to the *rishis* of the *Upanishads* thousands of years ago, should be obscure and incom-

prehensible to modern psychologists of the West. I rejoice to see, however, that the great American psychologist, Professor James, has recognised this truth so far, in his recent lectures on *Varieties of Religious Experience*, as to admit the existence of a very large and sleepless mind behind every individual mind. He seems yet incapable of feeling his way to the doctrine of an indivisible infinite Mind as the support of all finite minds, though he speaks of this doctrine with great respect. I cannot but entertain the hope that Psychology, in the near future, will see its true nature as a science and be again, as it once was, the hand-maid of Theology.

Now, the relation of Psychology to Theology is a very large subject, and what I have said is, as it were, only a drop from the ocean. But the time allotted to me is over, and I must stop here. I must forego the pleasure of speaking, on the present occasion, of the religious implications of the social and ethical sciences, specially as I must deal, at some length, with the basis of ethics and the nature of ethical judgments in speaking of the moral perfections of God. May the Holy Spirit be with us in the arduous task still before us and lead us to the truth as it is in him !

LECTURE VI

Relation of Brahmaism to Monism and Dualism

You have heard in my first lecture that Bráhmaism, as taught by Rájá Rámmohan Ráy, was Vedantic Monism of the Śankarite type. I have also told you that Maharshi Devendranáth Thákur, though a sincere admirer of the *Upanishads*, did not derive his Theism from them, but was, both before and after his study of the *Upanishads*, an Intuitionist Dualist of type of the Scotch philosophers, so far as his philosophy was concerned. We have also seen, from a hurried sketch of the stages of thought through which Brahmánanda Keshavchandra passed, that originally an Intuitionist Dualist of the same type as the Maharshi, he developed in his latter years into something like a modified Vedantist. Lastly, you have seen how, in the latest phase of the Bráhmaism of the Sádháran Bráhma Samáj, there has appeared a species of Monistic Theism allied both to Vedantism and the Absolute Idealism of Europe. Now, these facts connected with the doctrinal history of the Bráhma Samáj will convince you, if any doubt were at all possible, that Bráhma-

ism, as a doctrine, is historically connected with both philosophical Monism and philosophical Dualism, and that a series of lectures on the Philosophy of Bráhmaism cannot ignore its relation to either of these doctrines. There is a tendency in certain quarters in the Bráhma Samáj to ignore the relation of Bráhmaism to Monism. There are some who go so far as to deny that Rámmohan Ráy was a Vedantist on the ground that he taught the necessity of worshipping God, as if Vedantism did not teach the worship of God. There are others who say that whatever may have been the views of Rája Rámmohan Ráy, and whatever the teachings of the Vedanta may be, Bráhmaism has, since the Rája's time, become dualistic and has no essential relation to Monism. Now, it will be found, that those who say so are men who have never sought any philosophical foundation for their faith in God, who have received blindly and uncritically the belief that has come down to them from their ancestors or imbibed it from the religious atmosphere in which they live and move. At the best, they have found confirmations of their belief only in the current Natural Theology of the day, built on evidences of design in Nature, and perhaps in the uncritical experiences of their ethical and spiritual life. For such believers it may indeed be difficult to see what relation Bráhmaism may possibly have with Monism,—in what sense the Creator and the created, the Worshipped and the worshipper

may be one. The thought of such oneness may even seem impious to them and positively repel them. But very different is the case with one who dives deep into the evidences of the Divine existence and perfections. For him who has, from the very beginning of his faith, thought of the human and the Divine soul as mutually exclusive, it may be difficult to see their hidden unity, but for him to whom every evidence of the Divine existence reveals the finite and the Infinite as essentially related, to whom no revelation of God is separable from a revelation of his own innermost self, to such a one. I say, Monism, in some form or other, is not merely a theory or hypothesis which may or may not be true, but a stern, inexorable fact which has to be reconciled, by a process of philosophical thinking, with the Dualism implied in spiritual and practical life. People wonder how a Monist like Śankara, to whom there is only one Being without a second, should be blind to the differences which are so patent to common sense. On the other hand, to those who have attained to the standpoint from which Śankara looks at the Divine unity, it appears difficult to see in what sense these differences themselves may be true, consistently with the unity and infinitude of God. You will see, then, that the apparently conflicting claims of Monism and Dualism are worth the study of every thoughtful theist, and that if Bráhmaism is to be the creed not only of the uncritical believer, contented with the joys and consolations of unthinking and unquestioning

faith, but also of the philosophical thinker, from whom none of the difficulties and intricacies of religious thought are hidden, it must show, if it can, how unity and difference are reconciled in the relation of God to the world and to the human soul.

Let us see, then, how far and in what way this reconciliation can be effected. Those who have followed the discussion in my fourth lecture must have seen how very remote true Theism is from popular Dualism, the doctrine which regards Nature, Mind and God as three seperate entities cognizable by three distinct faculties of the mind. We have seen that in every act of perception we know matter and mind correlated as subject and object, and that the mind thus known is known both as subjective and objective, that is, both in the body and in objects external to the body. We have also seen that a mere finite mind could not know either itself or the world, but that in knowing the limitations of space and time the self knows itself to be above them. We cannot now resume the discussion which led us to these conclusions, but must take them for granted and make them the starting points of that into which we are to launch to-day. The self of the world and what we call our own self are, as we saw, essentially the same. The very condition of our knowing Nature is, we see, that she must reveal herself in correlation with our self, as comprehended within the sphere of our own consciousness. The Universal Self can be truly known by us only when it manifests itself as our own self.

What is popularly called the knowledge of God is merely so much inference, good or bad, or mere belief, implicitly and uncritically received. Really to know Nature is, therefore, to know her as one with God, and really to know one's self is to know it as one with the Supreme Self. But is not this so much unalloyed Pantheism or Monism, and if this is Bráhmaism, is it not identified with the Absolute Monism of Śankaráchárya? I must confess that rational and philosophical Bráhmaism is very different from popular Bráhmaism, though there is an essential unity between them, and that if popular Dualistic Bráhmaism had any exclusive right to the name it bears, philosophical Bráhmaism had better take a different name. But the history of the Bráhma Samáj shows that neither the one nor the other has an exclusive right to the name. If Dualistic Bráhmaism has been and is still believed in by far the largest number of members of the Bráhma Samáj, as could not but be the case, seeing that philosophical speculation is confined to only a few even in the most refined societies, the Monistic form of Bráhmaism more correctly represents, on the other hand, the views of the founder of the Bráhma Samáj and those of whom he called himself a follower,—those *rishis* and *áchâryas* who first used the words 'Brahman' and 'Bráhma' and gave them their peculiar connotations. However, the fact is that the Theism presented in the discussion referred to, the Theism at which we arrive by an analysis of our experience, our

knowledge of matter, mind, time and space, is not an Absolute Monism, not identified, even in all essential points, with the views of Śankaráchárya and his followers. Let us come to close quarters and see what the analysis of knowledge discloses, whether it testifies to a bare, abstract Infinite for which the Absolute Monist stands, or a concrete Infinite in which Nature and finite souls have a distinct though subordinate place. In my fourth lecture, in which such an analysis was undertaken, I was specially concerned in showing that Nature and Mind bear immediate testimony to an Infinite, Eternal and Omniscient Being. That Man and Nature exist in correlation—in unity and difference—with the Infinite, was indeed implied in all that I said, for this is as much a disclosure of the analysis of knowledge as the existence of the Infinite itself. Let me now accentuate the finite aspect of Reality, an aspect which was necessarily left without emphasis in that lecture. This can be done with reference to any piece of knowledge whatever, for instance, our knowledge of the note-book in my hand. The deeper truths of religion need not be sought in out-of-the-way places,—in the heights of mountains or in the depths of the sea. They lie scattered about us and may be seen anywhere, if there is only an eye to see them. What do we know, then, in knowing this book? As we have already seen, we know it in indissoluble relation to a self which is both in our bodies and in the book. The knowledge of the book

is the revelation of a self which is objective in the sense that it is in the object, or rather the object is in it, comprehended in the sphere of its consciousness, and subjective in the sense that it is what we call our own self. This self is, we have also seen, above space and time. In distinguishing this book from other objects, in knowing the limitations of space, it shows itself to be unspatial, above space limitations. In knowing the distinction of events, for instance, the appearance of this book to our senses, and its disappearance from them, it shows itself to be above time, without beginning and without end. We have also seen that to the universal, objective Self, there is no appearance and disappearance of objects, as there is in its manifestation as our individual self, for really there are no *mere objects*, objects always existing in indissoluble relation to the original Self, which is, therefore, necessarily all-knowing. Now, is the system thus briefly sketched absolutely monistic? It indeed seems to be so inasmuch as it allows neither Nature nor the individual soul any independent existence. If the denial of independent existence to Man and Nature is Monism, pure and simple, Monism is the only true system possible, and Dualism has no place in correct religious thought. But the fact is that though Man and Nature are denied any independent place in the system set forth above, they are not denied a real and distinct place therein. Returning to the book in my hand, we must see that, though the analysis of our knowledge of it discloses its indissoluble relation to

the self which is at once our own self and the self of the world, that analysis does not by any means merge the existence of the object in the self. In knowing the object, the self sees both its unity with and difference from it. The object is, indeed, inseparable from the subject, but it is also distinct from it. The object is in space and is limited: the self is above space, and is unlimited. In other words, the object is both qualitatively and quantitatively exclusive of other objects: it is white and therefore different from objects not white; it is small and different from large objects; it is here and excludes those that are there. The self does not admit of these distinctions, but includes all in its all-comprehending grasp, remaining indivisible and undifferenced all the same. Again, objects undergo innumerable changes. This book may go through a hundred transformations in the course of an hour. In idealistic language, the transformations could be described as sensuous or mental changes, changes in the *manas* or *vijnánam*, the understanding. But by no stretch of imagination or language could they be described as changes in the transcendental Self, the Self which is above the five *koshas*, '*pancha-kosha-vilakshana*', whose knowledge consists of eternal, unchangeable ideas. We are therefore compelled to admit the existence of a material or objective world distinct though inseparable from the world of spirit. We are compelled to recognise a world to which the conceptions of space and time, quality and quantity, substance and

attribute, cause and effect, apply in contradistinction from the world of spirit, to which these conceptions do not apply. Here Absolute Monism, like that of the great Śankara, fails us. Its analysis of experience is halting and one-sided. It sees enough to detect the error of popular Dualism. It sees that Nature is not independent of God, that it has only a relative and not an absolute existence. This relative existence it interprets as non-existence. Agreeing with popular thought in thinking that absolute existence is the only form of existence, it denies existence to Nature as soon as it finds out that it has no absolute existence. Again, sharing in the popular mistake that unity is opposed to difference,—not knowing that unity and difference are both implied in *relation*, it denies that Nature is distinct from God when it sees that it is one with him in the sense of being indissolubly related to him. There is, therefore, to it only one existence unrelated to any other existence. The one absolute exsistence is above space, time, quality, quantity, cause and effect, without any relation to anything in space and time, anything admitting of quantity and quality, anything under the law of cause and effect. The latter order of existence is only appearance, the result of ignorance, and has no reality to knowledge properly so called. Such Monism does not see that the Absolute, the Spaceless, the Timeless, the Unchangeable, necessarily implies a world of space, time and change, and is inconceivable and unmeaning without the latter. Absolute Monism, therefore, such

as denies the real existence of the world of time and space, has no place, we see, in the Theism which a correct analysis of knowledge reveals to us.

Let us now come to the far more important point of the relation of man to God. The analysis of knowledge indeed discloses essentially the same self in the object and the subject. The self which knows this book, for instance, is the same that is revealed in every part and quality of the object. The very condition of our knowing the objective world is, as we have seen, that the objective Self, the Self of the world, should manifest itself as our subjective self, or that, in other words, the subjective self should discover itself in the objective world. But the point to be particularly noticed here is this fact of *manifestation* and all that it implies. We have seen that the Self is, in its ultimate essence, one, indivisible, above space and time, all-comprehensive and omniscient. For it there is no change, no appearance and disappearance of objects, no passing from ignorance to knowledge. For it knowledge is not an act, but an eternal fact or essence. It is not the subject or agent of knowledge, not a *jnánin* in the literal sense of the term, but *jnánam*, knowledge itself, an eternal subject object. For such a Reality, revelation or manifestation, knowing or being known, which is such a familiar fact to us, seems to be a mystery. How should such a Being know at a particular time when he is eternally knowing, and by whom shall he be known when all knowledge is

concentrated in him? But nevertheless revelation or manifestation is a stern, inexorable fact and cannot be done away with by any amount of metaphysical subtlety. In knowledge the original Self becomes an agent; it becomes a subjective self and knows; it becomes an objective self and makes itself known. We cannot say *how* it does so, but we know *that* it really does so. In knowledge what we call our own self passes from relative ignorance to relative knowledge. As such, as the subject or agent of knowledge, it is distinguishable from the original Self, our inmost Self, our *Antarátman*, which is not an agent of knowledge, but eternal and unchangeable knowledge itself. This distinction appears in various forms. Though the original Self is, as we have seen, spaceless and timeless, the subjective self appears under the limitations of space and time. It is only a very limited portion of the world of time which appears to us in each act of perception, and our perceptions are all of the nature of events, happening at particular times and ceasing at others. Our whole stock of knowledge, however wise we may be, represents only an infinitesimal portion of the real world which exists in the eternal and all-comprehensive knowledge of God. We thus see that, notwithstanding our essential unity with him, we are, in an important sense, distinct from God. Our distinction from him, it will be seen, is as stern a reality as our unity with him. Our ignorance and our limitations are as undeniable facts as the eternal knowledge and infinitude of

God. Here then, again, Absolute Monism fails us as a correct representation of truth. It sees only the unity, and supposing unity to be opposed to difference, tries to explain away the latter as only *vyávahárika* or practical, that is, a datum, not of knowledge, but of ignorance. It denies to it *páramárthika* or real existence and interprets it only as phenomenal. But as the phenomenal also has to be explained by being referred to the noumenal, as every appearance must be the appearance of reality, Absolute Monism postulates in God a *máyá sakti* or power of producing illusory appearances. You will see that by ascribing such a power to God, Absolute Monism really stultifies itself; it admits, in a manner, the reality of that world of difference which it professes to deny; for a power in God must be a real power, *páramárthikí sakti*, in its own language; and as cosmic differences are its effects, that is, the forms it assumes, they also must be real, *páramárthika*, and not merely *vyávahárika* (practical) or *prátibhásika* (apparent).

Man, therefore, as an agent, as *vijnánamaya átmá*, in the language of the *Upanishads*, has a real place in the Infinite. His individuality as a finite soul cannot be merged in the Universal Self by any amount of correct knowledge about the latter. We are, indeed, obliged to use the language that it is the Infinite that manifests or reproduces itself in us as the finite self; but we must see that such language is only an imperfect means of expressing our essential unity with the Infinite—the fact that the Infinite

is the basis of our life. The imperfectness of this language is realised when it is seen that the Infinite, in manifesting itself as our self. does not lose its infinitude. Our knowledge of this hall, with all its contents, is indeed his knowledge, but our finitude, for example our inability to know at the present moment what is going on outside the hall, is not his, for all things are eternally present to him. In this sense, therefore, the Infinite never becomes or manifests itself as the finite ; and the distinction between the finite and the Infinite remains irresolvable. Perhaps the most correct way of expressing the relation of the finite to the Infinite would be to say that the finite exists in the Infinite as a moment or content, and it is the finite in the Infinite, and not the Infinite as such, which manifests itself in time and space as the human self. That this finite moment or content persists unresolved in the Infinite even in the state of profound, dreamless sleep, which is urged by Absolute Monists as a proof of the illusory nature of the finite, is proved by the phenomenon of re-waking. As I say in my *Hindu Theism*, p. 86, "That this difference between God and man has a place in the Universal itself, and is respected and maintained by it, is also evident from what takes place in the phenomena of sleeping and waking. In dreamless sleep, individuality, or rather the manifestation of individual life, suffers a partial suspense. The wave which constitutes it seems to return to the ocean. Nothing proves more clearly the absolute dependence

of man on God and the vanity of man's pride and vaunted freedom than this helpless condition. The individual sleeps in the Universal, and thus proves that it is at the absolute mercy of the latter. But the same fact that proves our absolute dependence on God, proves also the truth of our distinction from him. The temporary suspense of individuality in dreamless sleep is not a merging, not a total sublation, of difference. The contents of every individual life are, during this suspense, maintained in tact in all their fullness and distinction. There is no loss and no mingling. When the time comes, each individual starts up from the bosom of the Eternal, the Ever-waking, with its wealth of conscious life undiminished, with its identity undimmed. Every one gets back what was his own and nothing but his own. There seem to be separate chambers in the Eternal Bosom for each individual to rest soundly and unmolested."

We see, then, that though popular Dualism, the Dualism which conceives of God and man as separate and mutually independent realities, vanishes as an error in philosophical Bráhmaism, there is a place in it for a Dualism to which unity and difference are not opposed but mutually complementary facts. Such a Dualism, while it is free from the difficulties concerning the Divine unity and infinitude inseparable from popular Dualism, leaves ample room for those moral relations between God and man which are the foundations of practical piety and morality. A philosophical exposition of those

relations will form the subject of another lecture of the present series. In the meantime, we are to remember that the Absolute Monism which leaves no room for these relationships, and no basis, therefore, for any real worship or even any moral life properly so called, is vitiated by two fundamental errors, namely, (1) its confusion of relativity with illusoriness, and (2) its inability to distinguish between the absolute, original Self, which cannot reproduce itself in space and time, and the reproduced self manifested in space and time, which even in its moments of highest enlightenment, cannot be anything but finite and must always feel itself dependent on and subordinate to God. The first error leads it to explain away the world of time and space as illusory and thereby make even the divine attributes of omniscience and omnipotence unmeaning; for there could be no all-knowing and all-powerful Being without any *all* to be known and done. Hence, it clearly characterises these attributes as *tatastha*, relative, whereas to us they are *svarupa lakshanas*, essential or real attributes; for the world of time and space is to us real. The second error, along with the first, blinds it to the distinction between God and man. It does not see that man's knowledge of God as his inmost Self, though it implies his unity with God, belongs nevertheless to the world of reproduction and is manifested as the result of a process of spiritual culture, whereas God's knowledge of himself is eternally complete, irrespective of any *sádhan*, and is above space and time. Man, therefore, even when he

knows God most truly, does not become absolutely one with him. The distinction of *sarvajna* and *alpajna*, the all-knowing and the finitely knowing, always and sufficiently differentiates God and man to us. But to the Máyávádin both *sarvajna* and *alpajna* are *tatastha lakshanas*, attributes based on *avidyá* or ignorance, and are not, therefore, principles differentiating God and man. To him, God is, in his *páramárthika* nature, an undifferenced consciousness, and man, looked at from the *páramárthika* standpoint, is absolutely one with him, without any difference whatever. We have, however, seen how inadmissible this conclusion is.

However, a detailed criticism of Śankara's Absolute Monism, or in fact of any particular species of that doctrine, was not intended as part of the subject matter of this lecture ; and in what I have said of the doctrine I have not attempted any such criticism of it. My object has been simply to differentiate what I conceive to be the Bráhmic doctrine of God's relation to Man and Nature from Absolute Monism, conceived, as much as possible, in its simplicity. But as such a doctrine can scarcely be stated in its absolute simplicity without some reference to one or the other of the forms assumed by it in the history of Philosophy, and as the form assumed by it at Śankara's hands is the one most familiar to the people of this country, I have unavoidably referred to Śankara's doctrine, specially as it is historically connected with Bráhmaism. Those who would like to be somewhat particularly acquainted with the doctrine without studying it in the writings of

Śankara and his followers, and would also wish to see it criticised from the standpoint of a Theistic Idealism, I would refer to my lectures on *The Vedanta and its Relation to Modern Thought* and my account of Śankara's philosophy in Messrs. Natesan and Co.'s publication entitled *Śri Śankaráchárya.* I should also, I think, repeat distinctly what I have said in substance in an earlier part of this lecture, that I should be the last person to put forward any special claim to the name of Bráhmaism for the system set forth by me and deny it to the doctrines criticised by me, namely either Absolute Monism or the Dualism which underlies the popular Theism of the Bráhma Samáj.

As to philosophical Dualism of either the Sánkhya or the Nyáya type, I do not think any criticism of it is necessary here apart from what is already implied in the positive defence of the system I have set forth in these lectures. The Nyáya and the Sánkhya Philosophy have had no tangible effect, if any effect at all, on the thought of the members of the Bráhma Samáj. The Dualism which underlies ordinary Bráhmaism is the Dualism which uncritical common sense suggests to every one who devotes any thought to the relations of God, Man and Nature. In the minds of our old leaders, such as the Maharshi and the Brahmánanda, it was as I have already pointed out, directly or indirectly connected with the system of the Scotch philosophers. But even as such it received no philosophical defence at their hands except what was implied in their doctrine of Intuition. I have not

therefore attempted any particular criticism of their system, if it at all deserves that name, except what is implied in my third lecture, that on the Bráhmic Doctrine of Intuition, and in the fourth and the present lecture. Those who would like to see a somewhat detailed criticism of philosophical Dualism, either in the form held by the Scotch philosophers or in that taught in the writings of Mr. Herbert Spencer, are referred to my treatise entitled *Brahmajijnásá* and to certain portions of Bábu Nagendranath Cháturji's *Dharmajijnásá*.

I shall conclude by stating my firm belief, whatever importance you may attach to it, that the view I have set forth in this lecture of the relation of God to Man and Nature is the only safe and sure foundation for higher spiritual experiences. So long as you think of Nature as an independent reality, it effectively obstructs any direct realisation of God's presence. You conceive of him vaguely, and hardly with any meaning, as *behind* Nature, and not as directly present before you. When Nature ceases to be extra-mental, when you see her relation to consciousness, she becomes to you the direct revelation of God. Seeing Nature becomes identical with the vision of God—*yoga* or *Brahmadarshan*. You do not even differentiate such God-vision as objective or Vedic *yoga* from subjective or Vedantic *yoga*, as Brahmánanda Kesavchandra Sen does in his valuable treatise on *Yoga*; for you see that Nature cannot be seen alone—in seeing her you see the Self in which she exists. However, we may

abstract the Self, as much as possible from Nature and realise it subjectively, and call this realisation, as the Brahmánanda does, subjective or Vedantic *yoga.* And here, again, the views set forth in these lectures will be of great use. So long as you do not see the fundamental unity of your self with the Absolute Self, you simply grope in the dark and address your praise and prayer to an unknown God, a God whose very existence you may sometimes be tempted to doubt. But when you realise that it is the Self of Nature which is present in you as your self, your self-consciousness becomes the direct consciousness of God and your worship becomes the worship of a living, ever-present God, whose presence you cannot put away even if you wish to, far less deny or doubt. But here, again, there is the source of a great danger to spiritual life. Your attention may be so much concentrated on the essential unity of the Divine and the human self, that you may miss their difference and thereby obstruct the course of true *bhakti*, the higher emotions of love and reverence to God, and undermine the foundations of the higher ethical life. You must see that your consciousness of God as your very self reveals your difference from as well as your unity with him,—that with all your unity with the Light Eternal you are only an infinitesimally small spark of it and that your relation with the Father of spirits is not merely a natural relation, but a moral and spiritual one, making it possible for you to feel the sweetest and tenderest emotions for him.

Unless you see all this, your spiritual progress stops here. Here is the rock on which Vedantism, as conceived by Śankarácharya and his followers, has split. I fully confess the difficulty of keeping a firm hold on man's distinctness from God when one has come up to the present stage of religious speculation; and I am very anxious that in endeavouring to help people in obtaining correct, philosophical notions about God and his relation to Man and Nature—notions which may serve as the basis of firm, unshakable faith in the higher truths of religion,—I may not strike a fatal blow at the very foundations of higher religion, as our Máyávádis have done. I can heartily sympathise with Śrí Chaitanya and his followers in their dread of Máyávád and their unceasing and strenuous opposition to it—a dread and opposition which the Bráhma Samáj has partly inherited from them. But the remedy against the evils of Máyávád does not lie where many seek it. It lies, not in taking refuge in blind and uncritical faith and in avoiding that fearless pursuit of free-thought which is the characteristic of our Máyávádis and their prototypes in the West, but in following the very path marked out by them,—following it more steadily and perseveringly than they seem to have done, so that we may be blessed with a truer and more comprehensive philosophy of life, in all its varied phases, than they could find out and give to the world.

LECTURE VII

Conscience and the Moral life

In our fourth and sixth lectures we have considered what may be called the natural or metaphysical relation of man to God. We have found that that relation is one of unity-in-difference. We now come to consider man's ethical relation to God and his ethical life, the result of that relation. What we have now to see is that the relation of unity-in-difference in which man stands to God metaphysically, is also the source of his ethical life. We have seen in our fourth lecture that every act of perception is really the revelation of God to man. It will now be seen that in every *action* we realise a fresh aspect or portion of the universal and infinite life of God. Every action is an act of self-realisation, a realisation of the hidden contents of our soul; and as the Infinite is our real self, self-realisation is but the realisation of the Divine life. The life of a self-conscious being is throughout ethical, whether he calls it so or not; it begins from the moment an agent feels conscious of himself as a person having wants to be satisfied, capacities to be realised,—from the

moment he feels that there is a state of himself which is desirable and attainable, but which he does not actually possess. In all stages of the ethical life, the self,—some desirable state of the self—is presented as the object to be realised. On a superficial view, this may not seem to be the case. Most people may seem to be pursuing objects external to and different from the self. Food, clothing, comforts, riches, power, honour, even knowledge,—the knowledge of material objects—may seem to be quite external things, and their seekers to be persons desiring things very different from self-realisation. But, in reality, these objects are sought only because they satisfy certain wants felt by the soul, because they help or are conceived to help the realisation of certain capacities of the soul, because their attainment holds out before their seekers a more desirable state of consciousness than they possess. In the pursuit of higher, subtler ends, the same idea of self-satisfaction or self-realisation determines our efforts. In the acquisition of the different kinds of knowledge, in the emotions and duties which constitute domestic and social life, in the exercises and observances of the spiritual life, it is always the attainment of a higher state of self than we actually possess that is aimed at. An effort after self-realisation in some shape or degree—this is the form of the ethical life in all its stages.

But if self-realisation is the form of all ethical life, of all moral as well as immoral life, where lies

the difference between the former and the latter? What is it that differentiates morality from immorality? The difference, I reply, will be found to lie in the nature of the objects pursued. Though self realisation is the form of all ethical action, all actions are not calculated to help the true realisation of the self, or the realisation of the true self. Though all objects deliberately pursued as desirable are pursued for the sake of self-realisation, all objects do not and cannot help the realisation of the soul's capacities. Thus there are worthy and unworthy objects, high and low objects. There are objects which fail to realise the capacities of the soul, fail to bring about a desirable state of consciousness, because the relation of the soul to these objects is ill-conceived,—because the nature of the soul, and the nature of the objects which would truly satisfy its wants, are wrongly conceived. Thus, notwithstanding the identity of form in all ethical actions, there comes to be a difference of quality in them. Though in both moral and immoral actions it is self-realisation that is sought, the ideas of self which determine the two classes of action are very different. In moral action the self sought to be realised is truly conceived and therefore truly realised; whereas an immoral agent conceives it wrongly and therefore fails to realise it truly.

Now, the current Bráhma doctrine of conscience is that our consciousness of right or duty is a direct revelation of God's will or nature to us,—the direct

voice of God in man. Seen by the light of the exposition just given, this doctrine will be found to be an eminently true one. It cannot indeed be contended that every moral being, however low his intellectual attainments may be, is conscious of every dictate of conscience as the direct voice of God in him. This is no more true than that the proposition just stated, and explained in our previous lectures, namely that every act of perception is a revelation of God to us, is realised as true by every person, irrespectively of his intellectual culture. But that the doctrine itself is true, will be clearly seen from what I have already said. When, for instance, one is called upon by conscience, on the one hand, to read a book or hear a lecture, so that he may acquire wisdom thereby, and is tempted on the other hand by indolence to desist from the task, what really takes place is that a higher conception of his self than what indolence pictures urges him to realise that larger, fuller, truer self in comparison with which the self presented by indolence is an unworthy, contemptible one. Again, when I see my neighbour in distress, and am urged by conscience on the one hand to relieve it, to treat it in the same way as I should have done my own distress, and am tempted by selfishness on the other hand not to trouble myself with another man's affair, the struggle is clearly between a lower and a higher self, a self wrongly conceived as only confined to my body and one rightly conceived as both in me and in my neighbour. In both these cases the conception of

the higher self and its pressure upon the will of the moral agent is a direct revelation of the Infinite and Eternal Self in which we live, move and have our being. The conception indeed has a history. It has no doubt made its way into the moral agent's mind through a long course of culture. But its history does not either belie the source from which it comes or lessen the power and authority with which it presses upon the soul. The self presented by it is at once recognised as a higher and truer self than what it opposes and as claiming implicit obedience. In every moral struggle, in every strife between conscience and temptation, the question which comes for decision is whether we should follow a true or a false self, and the voice of conscience invariably urges us to follow the latter, our true self, which is no other than God, *Paramátmá*, the Perfect One. The realisation of our true self is felt to be an absolute end in itself to which other things stand in the relation of means. It is the one thing valuable for the sake of which other things have their values. It is, in the words of Kant, the one Categorical Imperative in relation to which other imperatives are hypothetical. But though the current Bráhmic doctrine of conscience is eminently true in substance, there is an element of crudity in it which I am not concerned to defend. It is generally believed, and the writings and utterances of Bráhma leaders countenance the belief, that all moral laws, at any rate the fundamental ones, are implanted in us or are revealed to us in the form of

intuitions. In my lecture on the Bráhmic Doctrine of Intuition, I have already shewn the erroneousness of such a view. As I have already said, our moral judgments have a history. They are revealed to us under different circumstances and at different stages of culture. But this history does not by any means lessen their authority or even affect their character as divine commands. Another error involved in the current Bráhmic Doctrine of Conscience is that the rightness or wrongness of an action attaches to it irrespectively of the object to which it is directed. Certain actions, it is believed, are revealed to us as right and certain other actions as wrong and their rightness or wrongness is absolute, whatever may be the motives which lead to them. When we ask why they are right or wrong, we get no answer in many cases; we only come to a quality, a rightness or wrongness, which we cannot further analyse, but which we must accept as a fact. Thus, "it is wrong to steal," is a judgment which cannot be further explained; it must be accepted as a final, absolute truth. We cannot say it is wrong to steal because it causes pain to the person robbed; because stealing would be wrong even if it did not cause pain; and even if the explanation were admitted as valid, the further question would be raised, why it is wrong to cause pain. "To cause pain" is not convertible with "to do wrong;" therefore the proposition, "it is wrong to cause pain," remains inexplicable. Now, it will be seen that there are really no motiveless actions, no actions which are not directed

to some end or other, and that, therefore, we are never given the opportunity of judging the quality of actions irrespectively of their ends. Again, it will be seen that the analysis which arrives at an inexplicable rightness or wrongness of actions, without any reference to the ends to which they are directed, is not exhaustive. "It is wrong to steal" is not, for instance, an inexplicable judgment the truth of which is to be accepted blindly. "It is wrong to steal," because in stealing one labours under a false idea of self. The thief considers his own individual good as all-in-all; he does not see that the man he robs is a part of his higher self and that his interest is as much to be thought of as his own. The wrongness of stealing is therefore, not absolute in the sense of being the inexplicable quality of an action to be blindly received. It is relative to the end to which it is directed, and the end of an action varies according to the variety of circumstances.

Every action is determined by some idea of good in the mind of the agent; and this idea of good varies according to the stage of culture attained by him. I do not say that there is no absolute standard of morals. As progressive beings, we do not indeed fully know what we shall yet become and shall be called upon to do. The Infinite Being is revealing himself in us only gradually; and it is not for us to count and take the measure of his inexhaustible store. But so far as we have been given to know the nature of our surroundings, the society of rational and sentient beings in which we are placed, our exact station in and relation

to it, we also know our duties: and so far as we know them, they are absolute. To all who have this knowledge of their station in the world, there is one single, unchangeable code of morals. But human society is not uniform. Various nations are in various stages of development, and even in the same nation there are different grades of society representing different stages of culture. The ideas of good conceived by men in these different stages of social development are very different; and these different ideas of good dictate different lines of conduct to those who entertain these different ideas. Hence the great variety which we observe in moral judgments. Things which are perfectly clear to us are by no means so to those who are much below us in the scale of knowledge and thought. Things which are right to us appear wrong to others differently situated; and things about the wrongness of which we have no doubt, appear right to hundreds and thousands. There is such a thing, therefore, as a relative code of morals,—relative to the stage of progress attained by various individuals and classes of men. Every one must be judged by the light vouchsafed to him. I cannot be measured by the measure which is proper for you. A Santal should not be judged by the same standard of morals that would apply to a Bengali, nor an ignorant Idolator by that which would apply to an enlightened Bráhma. All this will be clear if we take a brief survey of the various stages of self-development and see how the various ideas of self and self-realisation determine moral action in them.

The self to be realised may be considered either quantitatively or qualitatively. Let us first consider it quantitatively and see how, as ethical life grows, the self gradually comes to be conceived as a larger and larger thing. In the lowest stage the ethical life is individualistic,—as much individualistic, I mean, as it can be; for ethical life, even in its lowest form, cannot be purely individualistic. It comprehends, as part of itself, as contributing to self-realisation, some of the objects of Nature, and even uses other individuals as means to an end. Its centre, however, is individual life with its purely personal enjoyments and satisfactions. These may be sought from various objects, physical and intellectual, and may range from the grossest to the subtlest forms; but so long as the self to be satisfied is conceived to be a small, limited object, excluding other objects, other selves, such a life cannot be called by any higher name than selfish, and as such, deserves unqualified condemnation. It utterly misconceives the self, which is, in its true nature, the very opposite of individualistic, and thus fails to realise it. When such selfishness however, does not come into direct conflict with the interest of other persons, it is simply left alone as a tolerable form of moral degradation.

Domestic life is a step forward. In it the soul identifies itself with the family. It is not satisfied with itself,—not satisfied with merely personal enjoyments and attainments. It seeks the satisfaction of other individuals, and feels satisfied at their satis-

faction. The good, in whatever form, of wife and child, gives it a feeling of realised good for itself, and any evil befalling them shakes or troubles it. We admire domestic love and faithfulness, and give it a decidedly higher place than individual self-seeking, because the self which forms its object, the self sought to be realised in it, is larger and therefore a truer self than the self which the selfish man seeks to satisfy. In it there is a recognition, a partial and imperfect recognition doubtless, of the truth that the self underlying our intellectual and moral life is not a small, limited self, an individual excluding other individuals, but one in which many individualities are comprehended. The man living a domestic life, living in the lives of wife, children and other relations, so far transcends his individuality and takes in the life of the Universal Self underlying our life and making it what it is. But, as already said, domestic life is only a partial realisation of the true life of the self; and in so far as it excludes a broadly social life, it is an imperfect—a wrong and misguided—scheme of life. The domestic man is virtuous only so far as he does his duties by his family; but in so far as he is unfaithful to his neighbours, in so far as he robs, cheats, fights or kills them in the interest of his own family, he is vicious and requires condemnation and correction. It is sad to contemplate how very few people, even in civilised countries, have risen above the domestic stage. The Bengali, nay the Indian, is, of all civilised peoples, one of those most sadly circumscribed by

domestic limitations. And these limitations, the absence of a well-conceived and active national life in him, have cost him his liberty and made him the slave of people less richly endowed in certain respects than he, but possessing a breadth of national life which he can scarcely conceive, far less live and practise. In the Bráhma Samáj itself, the most advanced of all Indian communities, how very few are those who are not satisfied with a merely domestic life, with merely earning money and looking to their own and their families' comforts, but devoted to the boarder interests of their community and their nation!

However, let us now consider tribal and national life, in which undoubtedly there is a truer self-consciousness and therefore a truer and higher self-realisation than in domestic life, and far more than in individualistic life. In it the moral agent transcends not only his small personality, but also the narrow circle of his family and kindred, and sees his true self reflected in all the members of his tribe or nation. He identifies himself with his community and feels himself satisfied and realised in the progress and well-being of his people. This is the life of the true patriot—of the Moseses, Mazzinis, Gladstones, Sivajis, and Guru-govind-singhs of the world. The self they sought to realise was a very large thing,—one endowed with a large set of capacities and exercising a multiplicity of functions. Such an idea of self represents our true self far more truly than the idea

which underlies the merely domestic life, not to speak of the individualistic. There is, in such a life, a truer recognition of the nature of the self and therefore a larger participation in its true life than in those already noticed. National life, however, has its limitations and therefore its vices as much as the domestic, and it is by no means the highest conceivable. A good illustration of the limitations of a merely national life may be seen in the conduct of the modern nations of Europe towards foreigners, specially towards those who are weaker than they. Witness, for instance, the treatment of China by the great powers in their last quarrel with her, in what is called the Legation War, and of the Boers by the British. We see the same conduct repeated times without number in this country, whenever the interests—fancied interests, of course, when seen from a higher standpoint—of our rulers clash with ours. In such instances it were to be devoutly wished that these powerful nations had been less national in their sentiments and behaviour than they have actually been, that they had a truer conception of the real self than they possess. Humanity, then, —the recognition of the unity of all human beings in a universal brotherhood—in other words, in an all-comprehensive human self—is a truer self-consciousness that what underlies and guides the merely national life. But the due recognition of the unity of mankind is always found conjoined with a recognition, in some form or other, of a unity transcending

humanity itself,—a cosmic or divine unity, a Universal Father, a Universal Soul or a Universal Law of good, of which humanity itself is a partial manifestation,—which is at once the source, life, and truth of human life. When this Unity is recognised, every duty to humanity is seen to be derived from and due to it, and moral life assumes the depth and grandeur which we express by the term 'spiritual'. Such a life was lived by the great leaders and saviours of mankind,—by men who belonged to no tribe or nation in particular, but to humanity in general, and transcended humanity itself inasmuch as they felt themselves in communion with the Divine, and drew their inspiration from there. It is the life led by Buddha, Christ, Muhammad and Confucius, and those who have followed and still follow in their footsteps.

Qualitatively considered, ethical life may be classified into sensuous, intellectual, emotional and spiritual. Intension is no less an important consideration in ethical life than extension. The recognition of mere pleasures, for instance, as an adequate realisation of self is a most one-sided and therefore a misguided idea of the requirements of true self-realisation. Even when pleasure-seeking becomes unselfish, when, not satisfied with our own pleasure, we seek to please others, the true idea of the self is ignored and its true realisation unattained. The self cannot be satisfied with mere pleasure. It has other capacities than the merely sentient,—capacities which

seek satisfaction and realisation in objects quite other than pleasure. It has, for instance, a natural thirst for knowledge, a desire for truth, which demands satisfaction irrespective of the pleasure which accompanies such satisfaction. The attainment of truth is indeed pleasant; but it is a distortion of facts to say that it is for the sake of this pleasure that truth is sought after. It is for truth's sake, and not for the sake of the pleasure it brings with it, that the soul seeks after truth. The seeker after truth,—one who aspires to reach truth for himself and his fellow-beings—has, therefore, a truer idea of self than he who recognises nothing but pleasure as the object to be pursued. Then, again, the recognition of the higher emotions, both affectional and æsthetic, is a step forward in the attainment of true self-consciousness and the realisation of the true self. The feelings of reverence, love, friendship, pity and compassion demand satisfaction for their own sakes in the complex relations of domestic and social life and, far from being pleasure-seeking in themselves, are ready to endure a large measure—sometimes an excruciating measure—of pain for their own satisfaction. Likewise, the æsthetic feelings of awe and admiration seek satisfaction in the pursuit of all that is sublime and beautiful in Nature and Art, and demand recognition and culture as distinct capacities of the soul. But besides these various aspects of ethical life, there is another which stands to all others in the relation at once of source

and fulfilment. It consists in the recognition of the infinite and eternal Source of all existence, both moral and unmoral, of a Personality which underlies and sustains all personal life,—of a Reality in which all that is ideal to us is realised. It consists, I say, in the recognition of this Reality and in striving to realise it practically in our thoughts, feelings and actions. In the conscious effort to do this, morality is transformed into spirituality,—the moral life becomes religious or spiritual. Both quantitatively and qualitatively, then, the spiritual life, life in God,—*Bráhmisthiti*, as our sages call it—is the consummation of morality, the complete realisation of the true good.

Now, our moral judgments are, it is evident, determined by these various stages of ethical development. Inasmuch as the stages differ, the judgments also differ. The same principle,—that of self-realisation—lies either consciously or unconsciously at the basis of all; but the relative truth and value of each judgment varies according to the idea of self which guides it. In proportion as the self to be realised is both qualitatively and quantitatively broader and therefore truer,—nearer to the true self of man, which is God—the more correct and noble are the principles which commend themselves to the conscience, and the greater is the success achieved in true self-realisation. Thus, to the primitive nomad and in a large degree to the settled rustic, having little or no notion of a community, but living in the com-

panionship of wife, children and other kindred, the moral effort will naturally exhaust itself in meeting the necessities—and those only of a physical nature—of the family, and the claims of truth, justice, charity, friendship, reverence, etc., which imply the consciousness of a social self, will receive no recognition. Even to the civilised man,—if his education has been such as to fix his attention exclusively on the purely sensitive aspect of life,—then the pursuit of science and art, the unselfish service of our kind, the formation of character and the privilege of Divine worship will seem extremely unattractive occupations, and the enjoyment of animal comforts and pleasures appear to be the only thing worth the serious attention of man. That we are indifferent or unkind to our neighbour, that wherever his interests collide with ours we sacrifice the former to the latter, is due to nothing but our failure to identify ourselves with the self in him. Our choice of vice, in all its forms, is due to the ignoring or disregard of the nature and extent of our true self. The saint and the philanthropist are saintly and philanthropic in proportion to the truth and vividness with which they conceive the nature of God and that of man, and the extent to which they are guided in their actions by such a conception.

The resulting rule for the determination of the moral worth of an action is therefore clear. It is the relative truth of the idea of self which underlies it. Every action which seeks individual satisfaction at

the cost of the boarder interests of domestic life, is wrong, and the opposite right. Every action which recognises the affectional and intellectual aspects of life, is higher than those which identify the self with the body and its functions. Every action which seeks to promote the interests of one nation at the cost of other nations,—for instance, those of England or Russia at the cost of India or Japan—is wrong, and that is right which proceeds upon the notion of the fundamental unity of the conflicting parties. The merely moral scheme of life is lower than the spiritual, the conscious service of God higher than the unconscious,—because the knowing and loving servant of God is inspired by a truer idea of self than that which guides the unconscious keeper of his laws. The ultimate test of ethical good is therefore the realisation of the idea of God—the idea of a Being eternally perfect, but manifesting himself gradually, under finite conditions, as the soul of man. Whatever thought, feeling or conduct is consistent with the idea of this Perfect Being,—is such as he would approve, if he were man,—is right; and whatever conflicts with this idea,—is such as he would not approve, if he were man,—is wrong.

Here, then, ladies and gentlemen, is my exposition of the Bráhmic doctrine of conscience and the moral life. I know that it will seem novel and perhaps unintelligible to some of you. We in the Bráhma Samáj are not accustomed to hearing reasoned expositions of the doctrine of conscience. In Bráhma

literature you find nothing of the kind till you come to the writings of Babu Nagendranáth Chaturji. In his *Dharmajijnásá* we meet with the first attempt in modern Indian literature to give a reasoned theory of morals. Babu Nagendranáth ably defends the primariness of the moral judgment and successfully combats the attempts to reduce it to the idea of seeking pleasure made by certain theorists and to a mere reflection of social authority by another class of thinkers. But he makes no attempts to trace all moral laws to a single fundamental principle of our nature, such as the idea of self-realisation. The only other piece of Bráhma literature on the subject which deserves to be mentioned is Dr. Hírálál Háldár's essay on the "Rational Basis of Morality," in his *Two Essays on General Philosophy and Ethics*. The main idea of my theory is the same as he builds upon, but you will miss in his essay the detailed exposition I have given; it contains, however, some other ideas about the relation of the individual to society and kindred subjects which are very valuable and which I could not touch upon in my lecture. The exposition I have given of my theory of morals will, I hope, commend itself to your reason, if you only think upon it. I consider it to be the only theory consistent with Bráhmic teachings on the close relation of man and God. In my next lecture I shall show its bearing on our doctrine of God's perfect love and holiness. Meanwhile, I shall draw your attention to one aspect of the Bráhmic doctrine of the moral life which I have not

yet touched upon. It is the relation of reward and punishment to virtue and vice. That virtue will be rewarded and vice punished, either here or hereafter, is a doctrine common to all traditional religions,—to popular Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. It seems, from the writings and utterances of Bráhma ministers and missionaries as if they also accept this doctrine of rewards and punishments. Yet, from the earliest days of the Bráhma Samáj, the days when the Maharshi and the Brahmánanda taught theology in the Calcutta Bráhma School, Bráhmas have been teaching a theory of the moral life which seems to me quite opposed to the doctrine of rewards and punishments. That theory is that *Átmaprasád*, peace of soul, or self-satisfaction, is the only reward of virtue, and repentance is the only punishment of vice. They have also taught that the punishment of sin is not retributory, but remedial. Now, non-Bráhma theologians, specially Christian theologians, have always severely criticised and even ridiculed these ideas. Self-satisfaction as the reward of virtue and repentance as the punishment of vice have always seemed to them too inadequate returns of virtue and vice. To me it seems that the very idea of return in the case of virtue and vice is absurd. The idea of reward in the case of virtue seems to imply that virtue is not in itself a sufficiently noble and attractive thing and requires something nobler or more attractive to serve as its motive; and the idea of punishment in the case of sin seems to presuppose that sin is not

a sufficiently hateful thing to serve as its own deterrent and that, therefore, it requires something more horrible to prevent its perpetration. But really is there anything more noble and valuable than virtue or anything more detestable and repulsive than sin? It will be readily admitted by men of true moral insight that one who embraces virtue for the sake of anything more attractive as its reward is not really virtuous, and that one who eschews sin not because he hates it, but because he shrinks from the painful consequences of sinful action, does not really give up sin, but has the love of sin still in his heart. On the other hand, a really virtuous man would regard almost as an insult the offer of a reward for his virtue. In the same manner, one feeling, in the heart of his heart, that he was guilty, would not think that there could be anything more painful or horrible than his guilt,—anything in the form of punishment for his sinful act. These experiences seem to show that there is no necessary connection of virtue with reward and of vice with punishment, and that the connection imagined by us is only a reflection of the man-made arrangement which we see in the state and in society, namely that of visiting every crime with a punishment and every meritorious act with a reward. That arrangement is indeed a necessary one for preserving the peace of society; but it is one which relates only to overt acts and takes no cognisance of real inward virtue and vice. It is therefore not at all a safe guide for interpreting

the things of the spirit. Spiritual experiences, as we have seen, throw no light on a necessary connection of virtue and vice with reward and punishment, but rather testify to the absence of such a connection. The self-satisfaction which accompanies virtuous action is a part of itself and not anything different from it. It seems therefore an abuse of language to call it the reward of virtue. In the same manner, the mental pang which accompanies the consciousness of sin is something inseparable from it and cannot therefore be described as its punishment without outraging language. The very idea of reward and punishment is that of things extraneous to the act which they are supposed to repay. Self-satisfaction and repentance, therefore, as things not extraneous, but parts of virtue and vice, are not reasonably represented as their reward and punishment. Specially, in the case of sin, if punishment is only remedial, and not retributory, as the Brâhma teaching on the subject is, the repentance which corrects and purifies the sinner can in no sense be called a punishment. What is intended only as a remedy, and not as a return, is called a punishment only by a confusion of thought and a perversion of language. I think, therefore, that we should disavow that penal theology, that state or police-dispensation of reward and punishment which we have set up in imitation of traditional religions, but which is really opposed to our fundamental ideas of virtue and vice. We need not fear that our rejection of this penal or state theology will

anyway affect the growth of virtue in our community. The self-satisfaction which we hold out as the reward of a holy life and the repentance with which we threaten wrong-doers, are both things too subtle and intangible to act as motive powers to those who have not learnt to love virtue and hate sin for their own sakes. And for those who have really looked at virtue and vice face to face and known what they are, the state regulations of reward and punishment are useless, and even worse than useless. Ever and anon they rise like mists and darken our spiritual vision and lead us astray. Let us therefore give up this relic of old superstition in our theology and preach the plain, pure and unvarnished truth that the self, the true self of man, is the one thing really valuable, and that its realisation or development is an end in itself, irrespective of any other gain, and that a life of virtue is its own reward, if the word 'reward' is at all to be used, and that sin is its own punishment, if the word 'punishment' is at all to be retained.

Here, ladies and gentlemen, I come to the close of my exposition of the Bráhmic doctrine of conscience and the moral life. But I think that such an exposition would be considered incomplete without an enumeration, however imperfect, of the main lines of moral duty, a more or less detailed account of the chief duties which conscience calls upon us to perform. I shall therefore conclude my lecture by reading what I have got ready-made in hand, namely

a brief scheme of our duties as moral beings drawn up in my little book entitled *The Religion of Brahman.* I beg you to notice that in this scheme I have omitted those duties which we commonly call religious, reserving them for separate treatment in a distinct chapter, and that I have mentioned many accomplishments and excellences as moral duties which, owing to a narrow view of the ethical life, are not commonly recognised as duties, but which really form parts of a rightly conceived ideal of the moral life. However, to proceed with my extract, having laid down and illustrated the three main lines of duty, intellectual, emotional and æsthetic. I say,—

"These three main lines of duty indicate an ideal character which conscience calls upon us to acquire. What this character is in its fullness, we cannot conceive, for it is being gradually revealed to us with the growth of our moral life. As we follow conscience more and more strictly, it dictates higher duties to us, and our idea of the character we are to form in us is raised more and more. But we can nevertheless conceive the main features of this character. The various branches of knowledge, which it is necessary and possible for us to acquire, are well known. Each of these branches implies a corresponding aspect of our inner nature which calls for culture and development. The study of the various natural sciences,—of Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Physiology, Geology, Astronomy, etc., and of the moral sciences like Metaphysics, Psychology, Ethics and Politics, opens up

not only distinct departments of Nature, but also distinct chambers, so to speak, of our spiritual nature; and the pursuit of all kinds of knowledge in general calls into play and furthers the proper development of the common intellectual powers of the mind. Deep and steady attention, untiring perseverance, a clear and systematically formed memory, a vivid imagination capable of production and reproduction, the power of close and minute observation and of deep and searching introspection, the capacity of drawing correct inductions from particular facts and of applying general principles to particular cases,—these and such other powers, in all their vigour and fullness, form the intellectual traits of the ideal character which conscience presents to us. Then, under the second head,—the love and service of our fellow-beings—is included a host of noble characteristics which constantly call for the putting forth of our energies, and shame our actual achievements. A sincere respect for humanity as such, however wretched and even horrible may be the form in which it is presented to us, a constant readiness to lend a helping hand to every noble undertaking, a tender compassion and sympathy for all forms of suffering, a keen sense of justice which scruples to tread upon the rights of others in the slightest degree, a vigilant truthfulness which weighs every word before it is uttered, tender and watchful care of wife, children and all others whose life, health and education depend upon us, an untiring industry which hates all forms of indolence

and spurns all ease which it has not rightly earned, the scrupulous performance of all duties entrusted to us by our earthly masters, system and regularity in work and in the proper use of time, a clear conception and steady pursuit of our special mission in life, a patriotism which identifies itself with its country's good and evil and devotes itself to its service with untiring zeal, and a broad and enlightened philanthropy which keeps its ears always open to what is going on in the world and rejoices in every triumph of the cause of humanity and grieves at every failure it sustains,—such are some of the virtues which the law of love demands from us. Then, thirdly, the beauty and sweetness with which God has filled Nature, and which he has given man the power to create, demands the admiration and appreciation of our hearts. It is indeed true that the wants of ordinary men are so many, and the most pressing duties of life occupy so much of our time and energy, that we have but few opportunities of cultivating our tastes and enjoying the beauties of Nature and Art. But, if we only have a clear notion of the peace and harmony brought to our inner nature by a deep and sincere admiration of the beauty contained in the heart of Nature, and of how this peace and harmony makes many things smooth, sweet and tranquil which seemed otherwise jarring and full of conflict, then perhaps we may have more time and attention to devote to the culture of this side of our nature even amidst the arduous struggles of life. And one thing we can

all do: we can keep our hearts always open to the beauty and sublimity which Nature displays, and the sweetness and harmony which streams out of human art, wherever and in whatever circumstances of life we may be placed. The glories of sunrise and sunset, the beauty and freshness of morning, and the coolness and tranquillity of evening, the soft greenness of trees and leafy bowers, the variegated colours and refreshing perfumes of flowers, the gloomy splendour of lowering and moving clouds, the soothing murmur of little streams and the dignified flow of broad rivers, the soft, melting beauty of moon-light and the calm splendour of a dark, starry night, the playful mirth of childhood and the bloom and vivacity of youth, the varied scenes of beauty, passion and activity to which poetry and fiction introduce us, and the depths of sweetness and the heights of noble feeling to which music leads the soul,—these and many other aids to æsthetic culture are available even to the poorest and the busiest, and dry, harsh and unsusceptible to all lofty emotion must be the heart of the man, and stern and dreary the view of life presented to him who is insensible to the sweetening and ennobling influences which are thus unceasingly streaming out of the heart of Nature. The proper attitude of mind towards Nature, life and human history is evidently one of profound awe and admiration; and the duty demanded from us is the contant endeavour to keep the feelings alive by every means at our command".

LECTURE VIII

The Divine Love and Holiness

In this eighth lecture of the present series, which was originally intended to be the last, we approach what may be called the highest truth of Bráhmaism, the goodness of God,—the unspeakable love of God for man and the perfect holiness of the Divine character. It may very well be said that all our previous lectures have been mere preparations for this,—the foundation on which this is to be built as an edifice. In the abstract, there is really no comparison possible between truth and truth, as to their value; but in relation to the spiritual life of man, the doctrine of Divine goodness, or rather man's knowledge of the goodness of God, is such an important thing, that religion without this is little better than a name. A consciousness of the love of God is at once the strength and the sweetness of the religious life. If a philosophy of religion stops short of placing this truth on a firm, unassailable basis, it does not deserve the name of philosophy. Life, on the other hand, is dry, barren and bitter, with all its outward glitter, if it is not inspired by a deep sense of the love of God. Every true heart must cry out with the pious Fenelon,—

"Oh, what is life,
A toil, a strife,
Were it not lighted by thy love divine."

The great Vyása, it is said, was one day sitting in a melancholy mood when he received a visit from the sage Nárada. On Nárada's inquiry into the cause of his melancholy, Vyása said that though he had written the *Mahábhárata* and the *Brahma Sútras* (as the popular belief is) he felt no peace in his heart. It seemed to him that he had left something undone and that unless he did it, he would find no peace. But he could not understand what that thing was. Nárada replied that, notwithstanding Vyása's valuable works, he had left undone the most important of all things. He had not sung the praise of the Lord, and unless he did this, he would find no peace. Vyása, it is said, agreed with Nárada and resolved to complete his life's work by composing a work which should celebrate the praise of the Lord. The result was the *Bhágavata*. I do not ask you to accept the truth of this story. I insist only upon its moral. Literary efforts, specially in the field of morals, are vain if they do not help the comprehension of the truth of all truths—the love of God for man. And perfect love is, as we shall see, inseparable, nay undistinguishable, from perfect holiness. I shall tell you one more story before we enter into our main discussion. And this time it is not a mere story, but a bare fact. The great Chaitanya, as we read in his lives written by his followers, defeated two

great Máyávádins in controversy and converted them to his religion of love. They were Ácháryа Sárvabhauma of Puri and Svámi Prabodhánanda of Benares. The Svámi was the head of the Sanyásis in the holy city—the mendicant followers of Śankaráchárya. He had written many works on Philosophy before his conversion,—works expounding the peculiar tenets of his sect. But after his conversion, his thoughts ran in a new vein, and he wrote a work very different in contents from those he had formerly written. Its nature may be guessed from its name—*Rádhá prema-sudhá-sindhu*—the ocean of the nectar of Rádhá's love. The Svámi must have realised the comparative futility of his previous labours without this crowning effort of his life. Now, to compare little things with great, I may at once tell you once for all, ladies and gentlemen, that I have never had to go through any conversion from a religion wanting in a recognition of the love of God to one which recognises this great truth, and that I have never regarded philosophical discussions as of any religious value unless they can elucidate the supreme truth of the love of God. But it really takes so much time and labour to lay the foundtions of that truth, and in my case, in the humble efforts I have from time to time made to expound religious truth, I have had to linger so long in working at laying the foundation stones, that I have sometimes seemed oblivious of the real goal of all my labours. But I have really been not oblivious, but only patient and slow, so that I might be sure. While

I have yearned long and deep to throw away my building implements, soar high and sing a heartfelt song in praise of *Bráhma-premá-sudhá-sindhu*, my calmer thoughts have counselled me to stop and finish the tower at whose foundation I have been working, so that my song of praise may not only be heard by my fellow-worshippers far and wide, but may resemble more the constant and steady notes of the *sánái* than the ephemeral song of a bird which soars high for a moment, but the next moment comes down with tired wings to the very dust of the earth.

Coming now to the real subject of our to-day's discussion, let us ask ourselves what foundations we have really laid in the course of the previous lectures of the present series for building the doctrine of the Divine goodness. The first of our foundation stones, I reply, is the doctrine expounded in our fourth lecture that what we call our own consciousness is really the eternal and infinite Divine consciousness reproduced under the limitations of time and space When this truth is seen, affirmations on the nature of the Divine Being cease to be mere guess work, mere inferences. Our conscious life being bound up with the life of God, we can speak of the Divine nature with as perfect an assurance as we feel in speaking of ourselves. We have thus seen that the metaphysical perfection of God, his infinitude in time and space, his unity and all-comprehensiveness, his omniscience and omnipotence, are not objects of the slightest doubt; they are as much ascertained and

necessary truths as our finitude. The second foundation stone of our doctrine is the truth of our difference from God explained in our sixth lecture. This truth keeps us free from the errors of Máyâvád, which shuts the door against the doctrine of the moral perfection of God by making him the only real Being. Our seventh lecture is the third stone in our foundation. We have seen therein that Conscience or the moral nature of man is the direct manifestation of God in us. All properly human actions are directed to difinite ends; and the ends we set before us are, in all their divergent forms, reducible to self-realisation,—the realisation or fulfilment of the true nature of the soul. The soul is, as we have further seen, universal in its true nature and comprises the threefold power of knowing, feeling and willing. Its true fulfilment therefore implies the harmonious development of all its powers and its complete spiritual unity with human society in general. This comprehensive idea of self-realisation is an ideal of perfect love and holiness. The main features of this ideal are present to every enlightened soul, though its details can reveal themselves only in the course of our gradual evolution. Now, here is the most sure and direct evidence of the goodness,—the perfect love and holiness—of God. Conscience being the direct manifestation of God in us, and not a mere power of the individual soul, as it is often wrongly represented, and the verdict of Conscience being always for perfect love and holiness, for just and kind behaviour to all, God is necessarily seen

to be perfectly loving and holy. There is really no inference in the case. It is a case of direct revelation. When Conscience inspires us, when the perfect ideal of true self-realisation is revealed to us, our inmost Soul, the Universal in us, which is God, shines in its true nature, as the perfectly good, the perfectly just and loving. In these moments of God-consciousness we become spiritually one with God—one with him in knowledge, feeling and willing—and see him directly. His love and holiness, as well as his consciousness, become ours, and we taste, though only for a moment, the joys of *moksha* or liberation. Though short-lived however, except in the case of such godlike beings as Buddha and Jesus, this supreme moment of experience gives us our surest insight into the Divine nature and becomes the very basis of our moral and spiritual life. Even when we fall off from this high condition, even when our hearts are soiled by unholy feelings and our wills by unholy desires, we do not quite lose hold of the light vouchsafed to us in those glorious moments. The ideal revealed by Conscience, though not always realised as it is in moments of the deepest communion, continues to judge us in our practical life. The difference between what God *is*, and what we *should be* on the one hand, and what we *are* actually on the other, is always before us and serves as a constant spur to all our moral efforts and endeavours.

Now, this conclusion, namely that the ideal of perfect love and holiness revealed to us in Conscience is a direct manifestation of what is eternally realised

in God, may be sought to be evaded by denying the truth of the essential unity of God and man on which it is founded. For the proof of that doctrine I can only refer to my previous lectures of the present series. But even if the truth of that doctrine were denied, the value of the testimony afforded by Conscience as to the moral nature of God would scarcely be affected. Conscience, it must be admitted even on the lowest estimate of its character, is always in favour of perfect love and holiness. It is so at least in the best types of humanity. The inference from this fact is that the Author or Source of Conscience must be perfectly loving and holy. If he were not so, if he were unloving and unholy, he would not have implanted a faculty in the human mind which invariably speaks against unlovingness and unholiness. Even the worst of men do not wish that their children should hate them. If the Divine character were other than perfectly loving and holy, the Divine Being would never have made men so that in proportion as they grew wiser they would hate him more and more. If the heart and will of the wisest among us are attuned to perfect love and holiness, then, to believe that God is not perfectly loving and holy is to believe in the absurd proposition that the created is better than the Creator. It is to believe that the part is greater than the whole, that what is not in the cause, that is perfect love and holiness, has somehow or other come into the effect. I beg you earnestly to realise

the extreme absurdity, nay the self-contradiction, of the sceptical position that God may possibly be unloving and unholy,—that there may be defects or imperfections in the Divine character. If this extreme absurdity were seen, much of what has been written by clever and ingenious but really very shallow-minded thinkers on the possible defects of the Divine character would never have been written, much less lauded and admired as thoughtful utterances. The sceptic stands upon the ideal of perfect goodness revealed to him by Conscience, he identifies himself with that ideal and judges and condemns God by it! He does not see that he sets himself above his Maker, that he conceives himself better than God and thereby shows how little of the wisdom he boasts of is really possessed by him. Really the light by which he thus judges God is God's own light; and the object of judgment is not really God, but a creation of the sceptic's own imagination.

But I anticipate an objection at this stage. Conscience speaks unerringly, it may be said, in favour of perfect love and holiness, only in the best of men. In many human minds, its voice is far from clear. Nay, in many cases it seems to represent the wrong as the right, and the right as the wrong. How can Conscience therefore be accepted as the revelation of the Divine character? Now, I do not quite accept this representation of Conscience as an unsafe and unreliable guide to right conduct.

I have explained in my seventh lecture how higher and higher ideas of self-realisation are presented to man according to his mental growth. Men, as I have further said, should be judged by the light vouchsafed to them, and not by that which others have got, but which is withheld from them. However, let me grant for a moment, for argument's sake, that the moral nature of man is not, except in the highest types of humanity, a safe and reliable guide. But this admission by no means invalidates our main conclusion that God is perfectly good. As in the case of the metaphysical perfections of God, so in that of the moral, it is the highest and fullest manifestation of God in us that testifies to his real nature. The world in its wisdom knows not God. To the ordinary intellect, even to the cleverest and most ingenious men, the material world seems quite independent of mind, and finite individual souls seem sufficient for themselves and to be in no need of the support of an Infinite Mind. And yet the facts are, as they are revealed in a close analysis of experience, quite the reverse. Reason, though not revealing the highest truth in its lower walks, does so in its highest flights. The same is the case with Conscience, which is only Reason in its practical aspect. Though not revealing the moral nature of God in the lower stages of its development, it does so in the higher. As our moments of the highest communion reveal more of God than the days and years of common worldly

life, so the characters of Buddha and Jesus, though unequalled in the course of centuries and cycles, are infinitely more correct revelations of the Divine character than the lives of millions of ordinary men. But if Buddhas and Christs are rare, not so are their admirers and followers. As centuries roll on, the ideals of perfection revealed by them meet with wider and wider and deeper and deeper appreciation, and the world is more and more permeated by them and undergoes reform and reconstruction on their lines. Thus there is going on a course of continually clearer and clearer manifestation of the Divine perfection in human life and society,—a manifestation which is not darkened, for those who wish to see, by the lower and less developed forms of human character.

One great obstacle to a true realisation of the Divine goodness, specially of God's love for man, is a wrong or imperfect idea of what our true good is. Happiness is often wrongly regarded as the highest good, and love or goodness is supposed to consist in the promotion of happiness. The consequence is, that not sharing in much of the happiness which we fancy to be the lot of others, we consider God as more or less indifferent to us. The true good we have seen, in our seventh lecture, to be self-realisation, and happiness to be only a part, a small part rather, of true self-realisation. God's goodness or holiness therefore consists in the perfection of his nature in all aspects, intellectual, emotional and

æsthetic, and his love to man in wishing and promoting his true self-realisation. The course of self-development may, and we see it does, involve a good deal of suffering and struggle. God's love to us therefore cannot be measured by the measure of happiness he confers upon us. Nor should our thankfulness to him be inspired only by the remembrance of things sweet and pleasant with which he strews our life. The pleasant and the painful alike help the growth of our souls; and it is in this growth, whatever may be the means by which it is brought about, that we should see his love to us manifested. If we bear these facts in mind, we may be saved from many a difficulty which we experience, in the varied trials of life, in keeping our faith unshaken in the perfect love of God for man. One more word in this connection. Love and holiness, though we distinguish them for practical purposes, are really inseparable. Holiness is perfection in all spiritual excellences; and that involves love. Love, again, is wishing and furthering the good of others; and one cannot wish or further the good of others if that good is not dear to him. But to love the good is holiness. Love and holiness, therefore, are inseparable.

Another great obstacle to a proper realisation of the Divine love to man is a wrong idea of the scientific doctrine of uniform and universal laws to which the whole of Nature is subject. That idea is that it is only the human race as a whole, and not every individual

human being, which is the direct object of the Divine love. The laws of Nature are seen to be no respecter of persons. Disease attacks the sinner and the virtuous alike. A conflagration reduces to ashes the houses of all alike, be they lovers of God or such as scoff at all religion. A capsized ship goes down into the sea with both the pious and the impious. The laws of labour and wealth prosper the prudent, the frugal and the industrious, and reduce to penury the careless, the thriftless and the lazy, irrespectively of their attention to spiritual matters, Such facts seem to prove that the direct objects of God's care are not individuals, but men in general, as subject to physical and moral laws. On the other hand, the revelation of God as the soul of our souls is direct and individual. What we call our consciousness is only a reproduction of the Divine consciousness under the limitations of time and space. He whom Christians call the "only begotten son of God" is not more Divine in essence than every ordinary man. The powers of our mind all act through God's direct inspiration. The effects of what are called the laws of Nature,—and it must be always remembered that these laws are nothing but uniform modes of the Divine activity—the effects of these laws on us, I say, are felt as God's direct dealings with individuals. To suppose, therefore, that these effects are not intentional and purposive on the part of God, and that it is his intention only to produce a general effect by the working of these laws and not to reach, affect

and mould every individual particularly, is the result of superficial thinking. If the Divine Ruler were, like an earthly sovereign, unaware of his subjects individually, such a supposition might be entertained. But as he is, in the language of the *Upanishads*, the ear of the ear, the understanding of the understanding, the speech of speech, the life of life, the eye of the eye ("*Sotrasya srotram manaso mano yad vácho ha vácham sa u pránasya pránaschakshushaschakshuh*") it is a palpable misrepresentation of him to picture him as, like an earthly sovereign, administering only general laws and unaware or careless of their consequences on individuals. His direct dealings with individuals are an unmistakable proof of his special care for each person. General laws are not, in themselves, any disproof of his particular attention to every individual. And though the effects of these laws on individuals are most various, pleasant to some and painful to others, this fact in itself does not prove that the particular good of each individual is not intended to be served and is not actually served by these laws. Nature, independently of the light afforded by Conscience, gives us no testimony as to the moral nature of its Author. As I say in my *Religion of Brahman*, "Natural phenomena give us no direct testimony as to the character of God. It is Conscience which perceives the moral quality of actions, presents an ideal character of perfect truth, goodness and beauty for our realisation, and reveals a perfect Being of whom this ideal is an image. But for

the voice of Conscience speaking within us, the very question of the goodness of God would not at all be raised, and, though perhaps thinking of him as a conscions and active Being. we would not think of his being either good or evil, loving or unloving, holy or unholy. And the question raised by Conscience can be finally settled by Conscience alone." Now, the ideal of perfection revealed by Conscience, the ideal which guides our moral efforts and moral judgments and is temporarily realised in our moments of the highest communion, is an ideal of perfect love to individuals. A general care of persons as members of a community or a common brotherhood and indifference to the needs, requirements and progress of individuals,—this is not the highest idea of love revealed to our spiritual vision or realised in the best and most adored types of humanity. The highest ideal of love, that which draws our deepest admiration, shames our actual imperfections and fires our hearts with the loftiest aspirations, is one of the closest attention to individual life even in its minutest details, of the deepest sympathy with the sorrows and aspirations of every heart, and of the most unceasing activity in promoting the good of each soul. It is such a love, given to every personal being, that we must believe to be God's. To suppose that God's love is anything less than this, is to imagine him, as I have already pointed out, morally lower than his highest creatures, lower than even his ordinary creatures in their highest moments. It may also be said

that our faith in God's love, as just painted, will be more and more confirmed and better and better realised in proportion as our hearts grow purer and warmer, and that it is only in moments when our carnal life gets the better of our higher life and darkens our spiritual vision, that we begin to doubt the goodness of God and fail to realise it in its true depth and sweetness. A life of unselfish and active benevolence, and deep and frequent acts of communion with the Divine Spirit, are evidently the only means of keeping fresh and warm our faith in the transcendent love of God for man.

Now, when our faith in God's goodness is thus placed on the right basis, and when we endeavour, in all our moral efforts and difficulties, to keep our eyes fixed on this high ground of faith, the apparent inequalities in human lot and those events in Nature and human society which seem to be evils besetting the way of our progress and happiness, do not really trouble us much. As I have said in the book I have already quoted from, "In all attempts to reconcile the goodness of God with the existence of evil in the world, it must be constantly borne in mind that our faith in the Divine goodness is not an inference from the beneficent order of the world—from the provision for the happiness and moral progress of created beings which we see in Nature. A sound induction from these facts does indeed lead to the conclusion that there is a large preponderance of good over evil in the world, and that

the Author of Nature is a beneficent Being. But it does not prove that his goodness is perfect. Our faith in the Divine perfection rests, as we have seen, on higher and surer grounds, namely the deliverances of Conscience. Though we are liable to occasional mistakes in our judgment of what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil, Conscience invariably and infallibly tells us to choose the right and the good and eschew the wrong and the evil, and thus shows that he whose will and character it reveals is perfectly and invariably good. This unequivocal verdict of our higher nature, when heard in all its strength and fullness, gives us a faith which cannot be shaken by any number of merely physical and sensuous events ·· ··. To learn the meaning of right and wrong, good and evil, from Conscience, and then, from the tendency of some natural events to promote our good to conclude that so far as these events go the Author of Nature is a good Being, and from the seemingly evil tendency of certain other events to declare that these qualify and limit his goodness, is not a valid procedure. If the verdict of Conscience be accepted at all, it must be accepted in its entirety. If the distinction of right and wrong, good and evil, be regarded as a valid distinction,—a distinction in the real nature of things,—the faith to which this distinction bears withness,—the conception of a perfect Being,—of which our moral judgments are but abstract expressions, must be regarded as objectively valid, as the

revelation of a real perfection. When faith in the Divine perfection is thus based on its real foundation, the various forms of apparent evil in the world fail to shake it. Whether we are able or not to reconcile them with the Divine goodness by any process of resoning, we believe that they are reconcilable with it. We feel that it is the necessary limitations of our understandings, consequent on our being created beings, which prevent us from seeing the harmony of these events with the perfect goodness of God, and that to him who sees all,—sees what is nearest to us as well as what is farthest, the most remote past and future as well as the present,—all things must be in perfect accord with one another."

The fact is, however, that the problem of evil is by no means an insoluble one; and as science and philosophy advance, and man becomes wiser and wiser "with the process of the suns," the ways of God are more and more justified to his understanding. In what remains of our present lecture, I can, however, hope to give you nothing more than a few suggestive hints on the way the problem should be handled. I think it ought to be remembered, first of all, that there are certain impossibilities in the moral world as there are some in the physical; and that as the latter do not imply any imperfection in God, so neither do the the former. For instance, as it is impossible to make two and two equal to five, or to construct a triangle with four sides, so it seems to be impossible even for God to make another perfect being, a second God. A

created being, a being in time and space, must, it seems to me, be more or less imperfect. He will indeed grow continually, but there must always be some imperfection in him, and his progress will necessarily involve a greater or less amount of pain and strnggle. If such pain and struggle be rightly called evil, evil is, it seems to me, a necessary part of our lot and as such, is in no conflict with the Divine goodness. But in reality such evils are only means of good. Pain, error, struggle and conflict are evils in the sense that they must be overcome and their opposites,—happiness, wisdom, peace and harmony,—attained through them. They are only forces through struggles against which the human soul becomes continually stronger and stronger. They are therefore relative and not absolute evils and present no real difficulties to thinking minds in reconciling the actual course of Nature with the ideal of the Divine goodness in the heart. We may not be able to say always what particular pain, difficulty or struggle serves to bring what particular good to us; but if it is always remembered that wants and imperfections, pain and struggle, in some form or other, are necessary for created beings and are only steps to our higher good and endless progress, our inability to account for each particular evil will not trouble us much.

Now, as a particular application of the general law that no created object can be perfect, we must remember that the earth and our bodies are imperfect objects and necessarily follow the laws of slow

growth or construction and gradual dissolution or death. As geologists tell us, the earth has taken millions and millions of years to assume its present form and to become as well habitable as it now is. Its earlier history was marked by far greater cataclysms than those of which we hear and which we experience. A time may come when such cataclysms,—earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, desolating storms and inundations and the like—will cease. Man also, by his progress in civilisation, will become more able than now to protect himself against physical vicissitudes, as he has already become proof against so many of them. But growth and progress, in the case of material structures and organisms, are also a continually nearer approach to dissolution and death. As, in the case of the body, full growth and strength mean the slow approach of decay, so, in the case of the earth, full suitableness for human habitation will mean the beginning of gradual unfitness and final dissolution. As every individual soul is required to leave its body and seek another mode of existence, so will this fair human society be required, in some remote period of its history, to leave this stage of its activity and be transplanted to another. All this is in full harmony with the laws which are at present working in Nature, and there is nothing in it either startling or inconsistent with the Divine goodness. It is only if we identify individual souls with the bodies which they temporarily occupy and human

society with the earth on which it is at present ordained to play its appointed parts, that decay, death and dissolution weigh upon our hearts, darken our visions and thwart and check our higher aspirations. But the brief span of our earthly life is only an infinitesimal portion of our immortal life; and no judgment about good and evil can be valid which has reference only to our short sojourn on earth. Both in individual and social life, in the life of persons as well as of nations, many things must remain unfulfilled which we must hope to be fulfilled in a higher state of existence. As there are children in the physical world in respect of whom we do not regard it as an evil that they are so powerless, so ignorant and so little useful as they are, because we hope that there lies a brighter future before them, so there are numberless individuals and whole races of men who are yet in the childhood of spiritual progress, but who will yet, in the course of years, centuries and millenniums comprised in the endless existence allotted to man, rise to the true manhood for which their God-given natures are destined.

It is not necessary to take up, even as examples, particular classes of events which appear at first to be absolute evils, but which, when they have been fought against and overcome, are seen to be means of progress and of higher, happier life. Where would human civilisation be if there were not hunger and thirst, heat and cold, rain and storm and other wants and so-called inclemencies of Nature! In

themselves they are not blessings; and the wisdom which teaches us patiently to bear the ravages of Nature and not to resist her, is not real wisdom, but only foolishness and indolence in disguise. In themselves they are evils and must be fought against and removed. Our real good lies in the strength which comes to us when we have vanquished them, nay, even in our failures in struggling against them. The strength which we thus gain is not merely physical. It is knowledge, skill, patience, perseverance, sympathy and co-operation. Wide-spread famines, plagues and inundations, by furthering these and such other virtues in thousands and millions, prove themselves to be angels of heaven in the disguise of demons. The present close fraternization between Bengalis and Madrasis dates, I remember, from the dire Madras famine in the days of Lord Lytton, when bands of workers from this province went to help their dying brethren of Madras with the millions contributed by the rich and the poor alike. It would not be too much to say that our present political re-awakening, which has broken the slumber of ages, is chiefly due to the recurring famines of recent years, which, by revealing the true cause of our continual impoverishment, have also opened our eyes to its true remedy. The Napoleonic wars of Europe and the last two great wars in the east of Asia, the Chino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese, have, with all the sufferings caused by them, done an incalculable moral good to both Europe and Asia. The spiritual blessings which

sickness, death and bereavement bring with them are familiar to every thoughtful and pious soul that has the eye to see into their real nature. We need not, however, dwell upon the subject. There are enough of mysteries in Nature and society. Let us not minimise them. But we also know enough and learn enough daily, if we wait patiently, to see the wisdom of the English poet's advice,—

"Where you cannot unriddle, learn to trust."

We place a great deal of trust in our earthly friends. When we have closely seen their hearts and studied their natures, our trust in them remains unshaken even when we see many things in their dealings with us which we cannot understand. We justly consider that man to be unamiable who doubts his friends and loses his confidence in them at every step, on every occasion when he sees anything that he cannot interpret consistently with their goodwill towards him. What then should be thought of men who doubt the goodness of the Author of their nature whenever they are in pain or difficulty,—doubt the goodness of him who is the source of all earthly goodness, including the goodness of the doubter himself. As I have already said, the more you think of the true nature of this sitting in judgment on God, the more will you be repelled by its foolishness, its extreme absurdity.

Now, in conclusion, I have only to emphasise what I have already said in substance, namely, that a life of earnest piety and of active benevolence towards God's

creatures is the only means of keeping up a vivid faith in the goodness of God. It is a matter of actual experience that a merely intellectual conviction of the higher truths of religion,—a conviction not illumined by fervent devotions and earnest well-doing,—is darkened ever and anon by the very conditions of ordinary worldly life. Not necessarily by any process of sceptical reasoning, but by the very fact of absorption in matters purely sensuous, faith in supersensuous realities is apt to become vague and dreamy and elude our grasp. This is specially true in the case of such a subtle reality as the love of God. Mere intellectual pursuits, even the pursuit of spiritual truth as an intellectual exercise, cannot be a sufficient antidote against this evil. Love belongs to the heart: it is a sentiment, an emotion, in the highest and deepest sense of the term. It can therefore be grasped and permanently laid hold of only by the heart. It is only by constant and habitual exercises which move the heart, bringing into play the purest and deepest feelings, that a vivid faith in the Divine love can be kept up. Frequent and fervent acts of devotion on the one hand, leading the soul to the direct presence of God, and active service of man on the other, in the family and in society, not as dry routine work, but as direct communion of soul with soul, can alone keep up an atmosphere of pure and fragrant faith. It should be clearly understood that a life of spiritual dryness and dullness, barren of deep emotions and unselfish activity, is, on the one hand,

an unmistakable proof that those who live such a life do not, in the heart of their hearts, believe that God loves them, for it is not in the nature of man to be indifferent to love really believed in ; and that, on the other hand, such a life is the least calculated to lead to a vivid faith in the Divine goodness. Once finally convinced of the truth of Divine love, we ought to see that a life of dryness and aloofness from God, a life of forgetfulness of the mercies he is constantly showering upon us, is really a life of the saddest ingratitude, a life of sin, though it may be outwardly and conventionally innocent ; for we shall be judged not by conventional ideals, but by those revealed to us in our highest moments. Knowing, therefore, the transcendent love of God to us, a love compared with which the highest and purest earthly love, either of father or mother, of husband or wife, is but a shadow, we can keep ourselves pure, unstained and blameless only by a life deeply suffused with the fragrance of devout emotions, strewed all over with the sweet flowers of communion, and resounding with the soft and solemn music of loving service. If we can live such a life, if we can look ever and anon on the face of God, ever-resplendent with the light of love, and if we can feel his loving hand pressing upon ours, we shall find it easy to believe what our Maharshi and our Brahmánanda have taught us with such fullness of faith, that, inspite of our unworthiness, God really loves each one of us and even craves to make us his own in the fullest and deepest sense.

LECTURE IX

The Future Life

There was a time when I thought, under the influence of the late Francis William Newman, the eminent English Theist, that a belief in human immortality was not of vital importance to the spiritual life, and I still think that, as he puts it, such a belief is not needed as a bribe to make us virtuous. Virtue is intrinsically good and attractive, whether there be or be not a future life in which it is perpetuated and rewarded. We should do the right and eschew the wrong, even if it were proved to our entire satisfaction that man is not immortal. But though our duties to one another would remain the same if it were proved that human existence ended with death, the intimate relation between belief in immortality and the spiritual life cannot be denied. Faith in the higher truths of religion necessarily gives rise to belief in the immortal life, and this belief in its turn serves to nurse and enliven our higher convictions. The very activity of our higher beliefs,—the beliefs, for instance, that we live, move and have our being in a supersensuous world, sustained by an Infinite Spirit, that this Supreme Spirit loves us with a love with which no

earthly love can be compared, and that truth, love and righteousness are things for which the most valuable of earthly things should be, if necessary, sacrificed,—inevitably brings with it the faith that man's existence does not end with the destruction of his body, but that he is meant for life eternal. It is only to those whose lives are spent in more or less mechanical work, whose eyes are too much engrossed in material things to allow of their thinking of supersensuous things, who are too much occupied with their little selves to find time to think of a Higher Self beyond, and who see so much reality in worldly pursuits that the reality of any higher interests is practically shut out from their minds,—it is only to such men, I say, that the life eternal seems dreamy, hazy and problematic: there is nothing in their practical life to suggest it,—as it is extremely different from such a life. On the other hand, if the future life has ever become to you doubtful from any intellectual difficulties, you will see that your doubt will react upon the faith you may yet retain in the higher truths of religion. Nay, even if, without discarding it, you have only dismissed the thought of immortality as something unnecessary for you, because you can be, as you see, virtuous without thinking yourself immortal, you will not indeed become necessarily a bad man; you may yet be outwardly and, to a certain extent, even inwardly pure,—as pure as one who constantly thinks of the future life; but you will see

that the subtler truths of religion, *e.g.*, the existence of a supersensuous world, the transcendent love of God for every human soul, and the high spiritual destiny of man, will gradually become more and more intangible to you. Keeping up your faith in them will be a matter of no little struggle with you, for you will see that all these truths imply the immortality of the soul. If, therefore, belief in human immortality be lost, the loss of faith in the higher truths of religion, of such faith as can alone sustain a warm and vigorous spiritual life, is only a question of time. I speak partly from experience, from my experience of those days in which the tender faith of early years was killed by intellectual doubts and the re-awakened and reconstructed faith of mature years had not yet dawned; and I think there have been and there are still many souls who, from losing their faith in the future life, have come gradually to losing all faith in religion. I therefore heartily disparage all indifference as regards the cultivation of a living faith in immortality as of something which is of no practical importance to the spiritual life. It may not be of importance to the mere moralist,—to him who is contented with an outward purity of life and a certain amount of good work. But it is of supreme importance to life in God, to living in deep harmony with God's spirit, and, like the other truths of higher religion, like all beliefs in supersensuous realities, it should be kept vivid and active by study, meditation and devotional exercises.

Now, the two great foundations of our belief in the immortality of the soul are its immateriality and its spiritual destiny implied in its moral relations to God. Corresponding to these two foundations of faith are the two main sources of doubt as regards the future life, the misgivings that, after all that philosophers have said of the distinction of matter and soul, the latter may be only some subtle form of the former, and that man's moral relations with God may, after all that has been said of them, be nothing more than a mere idealisation of his moral instincts, instincts which have no higher end than securing for him a certain amount of secular well-being. I frankly confess, ladies and gentlemen, that I have often been subject to these misgivings and can heartily sympathise with those who are their victims. I have wrestled hard and long with these spirits of evil and taken pains to find out the proper weapons to fight them. As to the persistent Materialism which assails men in these days, whether they are conversant or not with the scientific thought of the times, I have found the most efficacious remedy in Idealism. I do not think any form of dualistic theory can give permanent satisfaction to the mind in this respect. All that Dualism, of whatever form, has to say in the matter seems to have been said in substance centuries ago, for example, by Socrates as quoted by Sir William Hamilton in one of the first of his *Lectures on Metaphysics*, and by Śankaráchárya in his commentary on aphorism 54,

chapter III, *páda* 3 of the *Brahma Sútras*. The essence of this teaching is that our perception of matter is itself an unmistakable proof of our distinction from it. In our perception of matter, matter and mind are distinguished as object and subject, a distinction which clearly shows that mind cannot be the product of matter. So far the argument seems to be quite valid and convincing, and many have found satisfaction in it and have sought no other argument against Materialism. To me, however, as to many others, the argument seems to lose all force the moment matter is raised from one term of a relation to an unrelated, absolute entity,—the standpoint of both popular and philosophical Dualism. And it is from this conception of matter, as an entity independent of knowledge, that Materialism draws all its force. If matter is an absolute reality independent of mind, how can we be sure that in a high and subtle state of evolution it cannot give rise to mind? This doubt seems to haunt both popular and scientific thought. There has not been, indeed, up to this time, anything like a scientific proof that even the lowest form of life, not to speak of mind, ever comes out of dead matter, that is, matter endowed with merely physical and chemical qualities. The late Professor Tyndall, who, in his famous Belfast address of 1874, saw in matter, by a sort of prophetic vision, "the promise and potency of every form of life," declared, after nine months of close analysis and experiment, that no proof of the generation of life from dead matter was forthcoming.

But he asserted at the same time that he did not think it impossible that such proof would be forthcoming in future. And he says this, though in his *Fragments of Science* he, as quoted by Dr. James Martineau, had declared: "The passage from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is unthinkable." But what is unthinkable, that is unrepresentable in imagination, which is all that the Professor seems to mean by the term, may yet come to be true. And thus both popular and scientific thought, in its sceptical moods, seems to wait for a time when it may be proved by purely scientific methods that life may come out of matter, and if life, why not mind, which is supposed to be only a more complex form of life? The discoveries of our own great scientist, Dr. J. C. Bose, who has satisfactorily proved the capability of mineral substances like iron to respond to electric stimuli and the susceptibility of this elementary form of life to be suspended by the action of poison and restored by the influence of antidotes, seem to point somewhat clearly to a day, not every distant, when this dream of Materialism will be fully realised. Now, I must confess that I sympathise a good deal with these anticipations, though from a standpoint very different from that which either the Materialist or the Dualist occupies, and fear no harm to the cause of religion from their actual realisation. The fact is that when you have set up an absolute reality with certain powers which it is supposed to exercise, you can set no limit

to the powers which it may possibly put forth in future; you must, on the contrary, allow it an infinite potentiality of producing phenomena. If matter is what it is conceived to be in scientific thought and in the dualistic theory which claims to represent popular thought in substance, namely,—the source of what are called physical phenomena and the cause of our sensations, I do not see why it should be held absolutely incapable of producing life and mind. Nay, to ascribe *power* to it, as science and popular thought undoubtedly do, is to concede the whole point at issue between Materialism and non-Materialism. To ascribe *power* to it is virtually to endow it with will and thought and thus to raise it to the position of the First Cause or Ultimate Reality of the universe. As I showed as early as 1885 in my *Roots of Faith*, the roots of Mr. Herbert Spencer's Agnosticism are to be found in the apparently harmless doctrine of matter as something independent of mind. The true answer to Materialism and Agnosticism I then found and still find in Idealism, in the doctrine established in my *Brahmajijnásá* and briefly defended in the fourth of the present series of lectures, that matter, though distinguishable from, is not really independent of, mind. It would be going far beyond the limits of this lecture to give even a brief *resume* of the arguments with which I have defended Absolute Idealism in either of my presentations of the subject referred to. I have only to say that once you have a real insight into the relation of matter to mind, once you see, with the penetrating

vision of true Philosophy, that matter without relation to mind is no better than an abstraction, and that mind, far from being the product of matter, is not even its constant correlate, but really transcends the limits which form its very essence,—the moment, I say, you see these truths, all materialistic doubts and misgivings fall off from you like the street dust which you shake and rub off from your body as soon as you reach your house above the dirt and dusty drifts of the public road. The only satisfactory and unanswerable argument against Materialism of all sorts, popular, scientific and metaphysical, is the truth, arrived at by a close analysis of experience, that there is no such thing as matter as conceived by these theories,—that the very conception of matter underlying these systems is self-contradictory.

This then, ladies and gentlemen, is my answer to the first of the two classes of objections to the immortality of the soul mentioned at the beginning of this lecture. But I shall not dismiss this part of my subject before I have read to you a few extracts from a very suggestive little book on *Human Immortality* by Professor James, the great American Psychologist, and one of the greatest of modern authorities on the subject of the relation of mind to matter. From these extracts you will see the exact state of recent scientific opinion on this important subject.

Referring to one of the difficulties of believing in human immortality dealt with by him, Professor

James says: "The first of these difficulties is relative to the absolute dependence of our spiritual life, as we know it here, upon the brain. One hears not only physiologists, but numbers of laymen who read the popular science books and magazines, saying all about us, How can we believe in life hereafter when science has once for all attained to proving, beyond possibility of escape, that our inner life is a function of that famous material, the so-called 'grey matter' of our cerebral convolutions? How can the function possibly persist after its organ has undergone decay? ....It is, indeed, true that physiological science has come to the conclusion cited; and we must confess that in so doing she has only carried out a little farther the common belief of mankind. Every one knows that arrests of brain development occasion imbecility, that blows on the head abolish memory or consciousness, and that brain-stimulants and poisons change the quality of our ideas. The anatomists, physiologists, and pathologists have only shown this generally admitted fact of a dependence to be detailed and minute. What the laboratories and hospitals have lately been teaching us, is not only that thought in general is one of the brain's functions, but that the various special forms of thinking are functions of special portions of the brain. When we are thinking of things seen, it is our occipital convolutions that are active; when of things heard, it is a certain portion of our temporal lobes; when of things spoken, it is one of our frontal

convolutions. Professor Fleshsig, of Leipzig (who, perhaps, more than anyone may claim to have made the subject his own), considers that in other special convolutions those processes of association go on which permit the more abstract processes of thought to take place. I could easily show you these regions if I had here a picture of the brain. Moreover, the diminished or exaggerated association of what this author calls *Korperfuhlsphare* with the other regions, accounts, according to him, for the complexion of our emotional life, and eventually decides whether one shall be a callous brute or criminal, an unbalanced sentimentalist, or a character accessible to feeling and yet well poised. Such special opinions may have to be corrected; yet so firmly established do the main positions worked out by the anatomists, physiologists, and pathologists of the brain appear, that the youth of our medical schools are everywhere taught unhesitatingly to believe them. The assurance that observation will go on to establish them ever more and more minutely is the inspirer of all contemporary research."

The Professor then goes on to show that the discontinuance of our mental life does not follow from this admitted fact of its dependence on the brain. He says: "The supposed impossibility of its continuing comes from too superficial a look at the admitted fact of functional dependence. The moment we inquire more closely into the notion of functional dependence and ask ourselves, for ex-

ample, how many kinds of functional dependence there may be, we immediately perceive that there is one kind at least that does not exclude a life hereafter at all. The fatal conclusion of the physiologist flows from his assuming off-hand another kind of functional dependence, and treating it as the only imaginable kind. When the physiologist who thinks that his science cuts off all hope of immortality pronounces the phrase, "Thought is a function of the brain," he thinks of the matter just as he thinks when he says, "Steam is a function of the tea-kettle," "Light is a function of electric circuit," "Power is a function of the moving waterfall." In these latter cases the several material objects have the function of inwardly creating or engendering their effects, and their function must be called productive function. Just so, he thinks, it must be with the brain. Engendering consciousness in its interior, much as it engenders cholesterin and creatin and carbonic acid, its relation to our soul's life must also be called productive function. Of course, if such production be the function, then when the organ perishes, since the production can no longer continue, the soul must surely die. Such a conclusion as this is indeed inevitable from that particular conception of the facts. But in the world of physical nature, productive function of this sort is not the only kind of function with which we are familiar. We have also releasing or permissive function; and we have transmissive function. The trigger of a cross-bow

has a releasing function; it removes the obstacle that holds the string, and lets the bow fly back to its natural shape. So when the hammer falls upon a detonating compound. By knocking out the inner molecular obstructions, it lets the constituent gases resume their normal bulk, and so permits the explosion to take place. In the case of a coloured glass, a prism or a refracting lens, we have transmissive function. The energy of light, no matter how produced, is by the glass sifted and limited in colour, and by the lens or prism determined to a certain path and shape. Similarly, the keys of an organ have only a transmissive function. They open successively the various pipes and let the wind in the air-chest escape in various ways. The voices of the various pipes are constituted by the columns of air trembling as they emerge. But the air is not engendered in the organ. The organ proper, as distinguished from its air-chest, is only an apparatus for letting portions of it loose upon the world in these peculiarly limited shapes. My thesis now is this: that when we think of the law that thought is a function of the brain, we are not required to think of productive function only; *we are entitled also to consider permissive or transmissive function.* And this the ordinary psycho-physiologist leaves out of his account." Professor James then illustrates this transmissive function of the human brain by conceiving the relation of the finite soul to the Infinite much in the same way in which it has been

explained in this series of lectures, specially in my fourth lecture, by comparing the Infinite Mind to the solar rays, the human brain to a glass dome or prism, and the thoughts of finite minds to rays of light transmitted through such a medium. From a fear of tiring you by lengthy quotations, I refrain from extracting his luminous exposition of the subject, contenting myself only with one more extract dealing with the exact scientific or rather unscientific character of the doctrine of thought as the function of the brain. Professor James thinks that neither the production nor the transmission theory has any strictly scientific value, but that the latter, the theory of transmission, with which he identifies himself, has several advantages over the other. These advantages are mentioned in detail in the treatise from which I have quoted; and I recommend those who feel interested in the subject to read the book. As to the scientific pretension of the production theory, the Professor says: "If we are talking of science positively understood, function can mean nothing more than bare concomitant variation. When the brain activities change in one way, consciousness varies in another; when the currents pour through the occipital lobes, consciousness *sees* things; when through the lower frontal region, consciousness *says* things to itself; when they stop, she goes to sleep, etc. In strict science, we can only write down the bare fact of concomitance; and all talk about either production or transmission, as the

mode of taking place, is pure superadded hypothesis at that, for we can frame no more notion of the details on the one alternative than on the other. Ask for any indication of the exact process either of transmission or of production, and science confesses her imagination to be bankrupt. She has, so far, not the least glimmer of a conjecture or suggestion,—not even a bad verbal metaphor or pun to offer. *Ignoramus, ignorabimus*, is what most physiologists, in the words of one of their number, will say here. The production of such a thing as consciousness in the brain, they will reply with the late Berlin professor of Physiology, is the absolute world-enigma,—something so paradoxical and abnormal as to be a stumbling block to Nature, and almost a self-contradiction. Into the mode of production of steam in a tea-kettle we have conjectural insight, for the terms that change are physically homogeneous with one another, and we can easily imagine the case to consist of nothing but alternations of molecular motion. But in the production of consciousness by the brain, the terms are heterogeneous natures altogether; and as far as our understanding goes, it is as great a miracle as if we said, Thought is 'spontaneously generated' or 'created out of nothing.' "

After these weighty words of Professor James nothing seems necessary to be said as to the difficulty about the doctrine of human immortality which we have been dealing with. But I shall not leave this part of our subject before I have mentioned

two facts which seem to bring out most clearly the distinction of the soul from the body. The first is the ever-changing nature of the latter and the identity of the former in the midst of constant changes. Our own actions, both physical and mental, and the action of natural forces upon the body, are changing it every moment. The daily waste undergone by the body is recouped by nutrition. That is to say, the particles lost by the body in the course of its constant change are replaced by fresh particles. A continual re-building, then, is going on in our bodies. This re-building, scientific men say, is completed every three years ; that is, at the end of every three years, not a single old particle remains in the body. So far, therefore, as our bodies are concerned, each of us is really a different person from what he was three years back. But as souls, we are the same persons we were in our childhood. Our knowledge and other mental possessions indeed increase, and many of our ideas change ; but the central personality, the "I," the ego, remains quite identical. We know that we are the same persons we were years ago, inspite of the changes we have gone through. This brings out most clearly the distinction of our souls from our bodies and shows the absurdity of our mistaking the death of the body for the extinction of the soul.

Another fact reveals this distinction even more clearly, and is a transparent evidence of the immortality and ever-progressive nature of the soul. We see

that when our body has reached a certain stage of growth, it naturally begins to decay. This process of decay may be made very slow and gradual by proper care,—by strictly preserving the laws of health,—and death may be postponed and delayed in certain cases much beyond the ordinary span of life. But neither decay nor death can by any means be avoided. The body is evidently doomed to these processes. They are as much natural to it as its birth and growth. But very different is the case with the soul. Its powers and properties,—wisdom, love, reverence, holiness,—not only increase with years, but show no sign of decrease. Old men bowed down with their bodily infirmities are—if they have spent their lives well, if they have used the opportunities of spiritual progress afforded them—the wisest and the best of men and the natursl guides and instructors of those younger than they. If the soul were identical with the body, and its powers destined to decay and death like those of the body, the case would be very different. The souls of old men about to die would then be as useless as their bodies. But what we usually see is the very reverse of this. The real strength and beauty of a truly virtuous and pious man often come out most brilliantly, like the glories of an Indian sunset, when his physical existence is about to close. It is indeed true that the mental powers seem to fail in some cases as the powers of the body are impaired. But really, it will be found, that it is not the powers

themselves, but the ability to put them into action, to express themselves in the form of visible and tangible facts, that fails. It is not wisdom, but the power to manifest it in speeches or writings, that fails in a man weakened by old age. It is not love or holiness, but the power to put it forth in touching expressions or far-reaching, beneficent acts, that becomes more and more impossible with the failure of bodily strength. And it cannot but be so. The body, though not identical with the soul, is undoubtedly its organ of self-expression, and when the instrument is impaired, the expression cannot but suffer both in quality and quantity. But this does not in the least invalidate the argument from the ever-progressive nature of the soul. Since wisdom love, holiness and other spiritual excellences are ever-growing and show no sign of natural decay—no mark of a limit they are destined to reach,—this is an indication that they are intended for unlimited growth, and that the soul, when its opportunities for growth and progress are closed here, must have another sphere of existence opened to it under conditions either similar to or different from those that obtain here.

Now, these indications of immortality from the immaterial and ever-progressive nature of the soul rise into clear proof when we contemplate the relation of man to God and the object of human life as it is revealed in man's spiritual nature. Kesavchandra used to say,—we find it stated in Miss Frances

Power Cobbe's *Autobiography*,—that our belief in God and our belief in immortality are not two beliefs, but really one. I take him to have meant by this that when the human soul is seen in its relationship to God, it cannot but be believed as immortal. Our faith in immortality is clearest when we are in our best moments, when our spiritual condition is healthiest, that is, when our insight into such deeper truths of religion as the love of God to man is clear and vivid. On the other hand, it is only when our grasp of such truths has become loose that immortality appears too good for us and assumes the form of a beautiful dream which may or may not be realised. Francis William Newman, in his *Hebrew Theism*, bases a forcible argument for immortality on the fact that no lover wishes to part with his beloved. God, therefore, who loves us more than any finite person can, will not assuredly, he argues, destroy us and thereby deprive himself of his loved ones. This argument gains an irresistible power,—a power which every spiritually-minded man feels,—when we consider man's destiny in particular,—the training which he is receiving in the moral order that obtains in God's world. As we have seen in our seventh lecture, that on "Conscience and the Moral Life," the object of human life is evidently the harmonious development of man's spiritual powers,—the attainment of perfection in wisdom, love and holiness. The domestic and social circles in the midst of which we are placed are constant helps to the gradual attain-

ment of this perfection. International commerce and politics are, with all their intricacies and with all the apparent and passing evils with which they are associated, also helping us to higher conceptions of human life and to the realisation of higher and higher ideals. Sometimes, indeed, our attention is exclusively concentrated on racial or national progress, and the individual seems to be forgotten or sacrificed to the good of the nation or the race. But a closer view of the matter discloses the fact that the progress of the nation or the community, apart from the improvement of the individuals composing it, is really unmeaning; and that the sacrifice of the individual for the sake of national good, if that sacrifice is conscious and intentional, itself raises the individual, brings out the true dignity of his nature, and points to higher possibilities for him in another sphere of existence. Both internal and external Nature, therefore, seem evidently to co-operate in raising and perfecting man and to reveal God's purpose in creating him. It seems clearly to be the one aim of creation to draw man nearer and nearer to God,—to make him more and more God-like by developing the higher powers of his nature. That being God's express purpose, it is quite incredible that the human soul can ever perish. Even a person of ordinary wisdom and goodness does not destroy his own handiwork, but rather endeavours to make it as perfect as he can. It is therefore inconceivable that a Being of infinite power, wisdom and goodness

should set up a scheme and give it up before it is half-complete. To create an ever-progressive nature, to provide it with all means of self-improvement, to make all Nature conspire to that end, to establish direct relations with it through the devotional exercises of praise and prayer, communion and inspiration, and then, at the moment when, through a long life of piety, that nature is nearest to its goal, nearest to its Divine Origin, to stifle it into death,—this is most clearly incompatible with the Divine wisdom, love and justice, and can never be believed by any one who truly believes in God. Belief in the Divine perfection, in God's love and holiness, leads necessarily to the conviction that the soul, after its death, will make endless progress in the path in which it has started and in which God himself is leading it on.

Here, ladies and gentlemen, we come to the end of our proof of the soul's immortality. As I said at the beginning of my lecture, and as you must have seen from the proof already set forth, it rests upon two fundamental truths, the immaterial nature of the soul and the spiritual relation of man to God. Those who have heard my previous lectures, specially the fourth, may think that all that I have said and quoted from others as regards the first of these truths, was scarcely necessary. Those who see man's essential unity with God, those who see that spirit is above time and space, do not stand in further proof of its immateriality. And its indestructibility and immortality are also implied,

it may be said, in its divine nature, so that the moral argument for its immortality is also hardly necessary. But the fact is that man's essential unity with God is a truth which, even when expounded with the greatest care, fails to command the conviction of a man of average intellect. Some minds, even when they are keen and clever in other matters, seem constitutionally unfit to apprehend this great truth. For them it is necessary to reason out the immateriality of the soul without any direct reference to the truth of its essential unity with God. And this is what I have tried to do in the first part of this lecture. On the other hand, it must be seen, what many people fail to see, that though the doctrine of man's essential unity with God, when it is truly understood, helps us in a remarkable way to see the truth of our immortality, it actually obscures this truth when it is understood in a wrong way. If you see only your unity with God and not your difference from him; if you have not a firm hold of your individuality, which makes you necessarily distinct from as well as one with God; if your individuality appears to you as only a more or less false appearance of his infinity, an appearance the falsity of which is apprehended more and more clearly as we advance in true knowledge; then, the immortality of the human soul, that is, its eternal distinction from God, will appear to you not only as an undesirable thing, but as something almost unmeaning. In that case the final merging of the finite in the Infinite, that is, from *this* standpoint, of the false in the true, will seem to be a most natural

and desirable thing. I need hardly say that this doctrine of the merging of the finite soul in God has actually been taught by a certain class of our Indian philosophers. Now, I should be the last man to say that this doctrine deserves to be summarily dismissed as absurd and unreasonable on the very face of it. It is only those who float on the surface of philosophical truth and do not dive into its depth, that would say so. To me it seems to be a veritable Castle of Doubt in the path of the pilgrim-soul's progress to divine truth, a castle strong enough to detain the soul for years and perhaps for ages. The unity of God and man may be seen so deeply as to obscure for a time the truth of our eternal distinction from God. The vision of unity has a certain glare, in and by which distinction is for a time obliterated. But this glare may be remedied, as I have shown in my sixth lecture, and our distinction from God as clearly seen as our unity with him. Unless this is seen, spiritual culture and spiritual progress seem unmeaning and the immortality of the soul turns out to be nothing more or less than the immortality of God, which nobody ever questions and which does not stand in need of any proof. The mere immateriality of the soul is therefore no proof of its distinction from God and of its immortality. Hence we see the value, for the doctrine of human immortality, of the moral argument I have set forth in this lecture. Our distinction from God, our progressiveness, and God's care of us as individuals,—these truths must be distinctly seen before our faith in our immortal life can stand on an immovable basis.

Coming, now, from the proof of immortality to the form or conditions of immortal life, we find that there are three suppositions extant, (1) that the soul will continue after death in a purely disembodied state, (2) that it will do so in a subtle or astral body (*súkshma or linga śaríra*) without being re-born, and (3) that it will go through the process of re-birth till it has been freed from the fetters of *karma* and has attained *moksha* or liberation, when re-birth will be optional. Of these three ideas the first seems to be favoured by most Bráhmas. Maharshi Devendranath Thákur seems, however, to have favoured the second, as appears from a little book which professes to give the views of his later life. In that book he seems even to lean to the doctrine of re-birth. The late Reverend Pratápchandra Mazumdár leans even more distinctly to the doctrine of pre-existence and re-incarnation in his *Áśish*. There is a small number of Bráhmas who accept the doctrine of re-birth, and there is perhaps a considerable number who consider re-birth as quite possible. To me a purely disembodied finite soul seems to be little short of a self-contradiction. The very idea of an individul soul seems to imply a limiting adjunct, however subtle—a medium through which the infinite Thought and Life manifests itself as the thought and life of a finite being. The idea of a *súkshma śaríra*, therefore, seems to me quite reasonable. I also think that the doctrine of re incarnation has much to be said in its favour. In my *Hindu Theism* and my *Advaitaváda—Práchya o Páschátya*, I have said in

substance all I have to say in defence of the doctrine. I shall not repeat here the arguments set forth there, for the doctrine of re-birth is a personal opinion with me as it is with some other Bráhmas, and not a cardinal principle of Bráhmaism. I may, therefore, I think, be permitted to say in this connection, that I do not see, as some profess to do, any conflict between the doctrine of re-birth and that of the endless progress of the soul, which latter is a cardinal doctrine of Bráhmaism. "If", some say, "we forget everything learnt by us in a former life, and have to begin anew at every birth, then there is no real progress." But the fact is that the advocates of re-birth do *not* think that the net spiritual result of past lives is really lost when a soul is re-born. Its spiritual possessions, they say, remain in tact as powers and determine its successive lives. But the idea that a human soul can be re-born as that of a lower animal, seems really to conflict with the idea of progress ; and many modern advocates of the doctrine of re-incarnation do not think that such retrogression really takes place. However, leaving the question of re-birth as open as it seems to be among the members of the Bráhma Samáj, I shall briefly touch, before I close, upon another point connected with the future life regarding which Bráhmas are yet divided amongst themselves. It is the question of Spiritualism, of a supposed intercourse between the dead and the living. While, on the other hand, there are among Bráhmas ardent believers in such intercourse, men who speak with the

utmost confidence of communications received by them from departed spirits, there are others who ridicule the very idea of such commnications. As Spiritualism is concerned with positive facts, at any rate alleged facts rather than with arguments, I think I shall not do it any injustice if I do not discuss it herc at any length. But perhaps I may be permitted to say in regard to it that its evidences have, during the last thirty years or so, attained to a magnitude and importance which they did not possess before. The number of eminent scientists who now advocate it on purely scientific grounds, and books like Professor Myer's *Human Personality* containing its evidences, are remarkable signs of the times. All these inspire me with a hope, and I have heard others giving expression to the same hope, that before the present century closes the truth of human immortality will, instead of being confined to argument and spiritual experience, be placed on a purely experimental basis and will command the belief alike of the reflective and the unreflective, the spiritual and unspiritual. I think there can be only one opinion on the point, that "it is a consummation devoutly to be wished."

LECTURE X

The Brahma system of *Sadhan* or Spiritual Culture

I am happy in leaving behind, in the holy journey I have undertaken, the region of pure doctrine, abounding in discussions and controversies, which indeed serve the most useful purposes and must be gone through in a calm and patient spirit, but which are not always delightful even to a practised and much-travelled pilgrim in these regions. To those unfamiliar with these rough and rocky tracts it must have been a great trial to keep company with me; and I fear that at each stage of the journey some left me, refusing to face the difficulties which loomed before them. We now enter a more pleasant part of our way, a region not so much of close analysis and reasoning as of practical experience,—an experience of a most delightful kind, if only one has the heart to enjoy the delight. But to the lazy and the ease-loving all journey, even that in a delightful region, is difficult and unattractive. Exercises of the heart are as arduous to them as those of the mind. There are hundreds who join our services who do not know what our system of

sádhan is,—they do not enter even into the spirit of the service they habitually attend; and I have known men who have been in the Bráhma Samáj for years, nay even decades, but who have never seriously inquired into the teachings of our leaders on spiritual culture. Leaving out such idlers and ease-lovers, I hope that by the more earnest of my hearers, the present and, on the whole the remaining part of our journey, in which we shall mostly be occupied with questions of a devotional and social nature, will be performed with less labour and perhaps greater pleasure than the one we have already accomplished.

Necessarily, a historical treatment of the subject in hand will be more useful than one purely expository; and I propose to speak of the Bráhma system of *sádhan* as it has been developed under the leading of Rájá Rámmohan Ráy, Maharshi Devendranth Thákur, Brahmánanda Kesavchandra Sen and the Sádháran Bráhma Samáj. Now, you will remember what I said on the Raja's and the Maharshi's systems of *sádhan* in my first lecture. Those remarks will perhaps now be better understood if I present to you the actual forms of service which were used in the Bráhma Samáj in those days. The form of public service adopted by the Rájá seems to have been the following:—Besides hymns, whose number and order cannot now be ascertained, the two texts, *Om Tat Sat* and *Ekamevádvitíyam Brahma*, seem to have been uttered first and then meditated upon. The Rájá explains them as "That True Being is the cause of the creation, preservation and ab-

sorption of the world," and "The One without a second is all-pervading and eternal." Then came another text, one from the third or Bhrigu Valli of the *Taittiríya Upanishad*, for utterance and meditation in the same way. The process of meditation itself is pointed out in a number of Sanskrit and Bengali verses, which also seem to have been chanted either by the minister alone or by the whole congregation. The text, as I translate it in my Devanágari and English edition of the *Upanishads*, is as follows :—"From which these creatures are born, through which they, being born, live, and into which they return and enter, seek to know that well. That is Brahman." The explanatory verses may be literally translated as follows :—"From which the worlds arise, through which animals live, and in which they are absorbed, that is the Supreme Refuge. Through whose fear this air blows, through whose fear the sun shines and from which the mental powers arise, that is the supreme Refuge. Through which the trees yield fruits, through which the creepers are adorned with flowers, and under whose control the planets move, that is the Supreme Refuge."

The Bengali verses, giving only the drift of the Sanskrit ones, may be literally translated as follows :—"From which this world arises gradually, through whose will it, having arisen, exists, in which, after destruction, it is gradually absorbed, wish to know that ; that is Brahman."

Then followed the well known *stotra* from the *Mahánirván Tantra*, in its original form, of which the

following is a literal English translation :—"We bow down to thee, the true, the support of all the worlds. We bow down to thee, the conscious, who existest in all forms or in the form of the world. We bow down to thee, one only truth, the giver of liberation. We bow down to the all-pervading Brahman, without the *gunas*. Thou art the only refuge, thou art the the only adorable one, thou art the one only cause of the world, of all forms or of the form of the world. Thou art the one only creator, sustainer and guard of the world. Thou only art above all, immovable and unchangeable. Thou art the fear of the fearful, dreadful to those that are dreadful, the refuge of living beings and the sanctifier of those that sanctify. Thou alone art the regulator of high situations, above those that are above all, and the protector of those that protect. O God, O Lord, O thou who existest in all forms and art indestructible, undefinable, beyond all senses, the true, unimaginable, above decay, pervading, truth unmanifested, pervading the universe, the lord of lords and the eternal, we remember thee, we utter thy name again and again, we bow down to thee, who art the witness of the world. We approach thee, the lord who art our support, but art thyself without any support, the source of all, propitious and our refuge."

Now, there cannot be the slightest doubt that this is a praise or adoration addressed to a known and personal God and not the meditation of an impersonal Essence. In other words, it is a form of theistic and

not pantheistic worship. But to the Maharshi it seemed to be vitiated by a few pantheistic conceptions, and of these he purged the *stotra* before adopting it as a part of the liturgy prescribed by him. We shall presently return to the changes introduced by him, when we shall more closely look into their nature and extent. In the meantime I shall have done with the Rájá's form of devotions by giving the translation of a Sanskrit hymn which seems to have been an integral part of the form and not simply one which was occasionally sung in the course of the service, like other hymns composed by himself and his friends. This particular hymn was, I may add, the Raja's own. It is as follows:

"Meditate with a calm heart on the supreme Lord, who is eternal, fearless, beyond sorrow, without a body, perfect, without beginning, and who lives in all things, moving and unmoving. Accept the instruction of those who know the truth. He from whom the world arises, in whom it exists and by whom it is destroyed, from whose fear the sun and the moon move and the air blows, by a perception of whom illusion is removed, and sorrow does not rise again, he who is not the object of the senses, is alone the great Refuge of all refuges in the world."

Now, it will no doubt be felt by those to whom the heights and depths of devotion are not unknown, that the form of worship just described is defective in so far as it confines the mind to certain simple relations of man and of the world to God and scarcely takes

cognisance of the deeper and sweeter relations of the human soul to the Divine Being,—relations on a due recognition and cultivation of which depends the progress of the soul in love and holiness. When we feel this, we are to remember that the body of theistic worshippers for whom this form of worship was prescribed had just emerged from the ceremonial worship of idols or from an utter absence of worship to a recognition of the living God as the object of worship,—worship in spirit and in truth. Under such circumstances, their worship could not but be more or less elementary. The explanation lies also partly in the Sankarite association of the Bráhma Samáj of those days. The Sankarite school had not developed the sweeter aspects of worship; and the Bráhma Samáj suffered in those days on account of its greater or less identification with that school. I say Sankarite, and not Vedántic, for there are other schools of the Vedánta, specially the Vaishnava schools, in which the emotional side of worship had been fully developed. But Vaishnavism has always been identifid with the worship of idols and incarnations, notwithstanding the Vedantic background of its higher forms. The theistic worshippers of those days therefore naturally and I think wisely kept their movement free from association with the Vaishnava schools. It was left to later Bráhma leaders, specially Kesavchandra Sen, to discover the way in which the higher forms of *bhakti* or piety developed in the Vaishnava schools could be cultivated and at the same time the evils of idolatry and man-worship avoided.

Coming now to the days of the Maharshi, we find him trying to remedy the defects already mentioned by introducing a fuller form of public devotions,—one which took cognisance of the deeper and sweeter relations of the soul to God. Of this form, the first part is called *archaná* and consists of the well-known texts from the Yajurveda beginning with "*Om pitá nohsi*", "Thou art our Father," which clearly recognise the fatherhood of God and pray to him to forgive our sins. The second part is called *pranámah* and consists of the well-known texts from the *Svetásvatara Upanishad* beginning with "*Yo devagnau.*" The third part is called *samádhánam.* It is divided into two portions, the first consisting of the texts beginning with "*Om satyam jnánam anantam Brahma*" and meditations thereon, and the second of texts beginning "*Om saparyagát*" followed by a Bengali translation of the same. Both sets of texts are from the *Upanishads.* The fourth part is called *dhyánam* and consists of the well-known *Gáyatrí mantra* followed by meditation on it. The fifth part is named *stotram* and consists of an abbreviated and altered form of the texts of the *Mahánirvan Tantra* already referred to, with a translation thereof. The Maharshi's abbreviation of the *stotra* consists in leaving out two rather unsonorous couplets, the seventh and the eighth, those beginning with "*Paresha prabho sarvarupávinásin* ("O God, O Lord, O thou who existest in all forms and art indestructible"). Perhaps *sarvarupa* (all-formed) seemed to him pantheistic. The more im-

portant changes made in the portion that remains are the substitution, for the words *'visvarupátmakáya'* (to him who exists in all forms), *'nirgunáya'* (without the *gunas*) and *'visvarupam'* (all-formed), of such as appeared more consistent with theism as he understood it. It may perhaps be said that we in these days have realised too clearly the place of Monism and Pantheism in Bráhmaism, as well as their limitations, to feel any serious objection to these words. I for one would be glad to see the *stotra* restored in its original form in the place of the mutilated form in which it now appears. I take serious exception to taking liberties with scriptural texts, in fact with any quotations whatever. Use them as they are, without the least tampering with them, or do not use them at all if you find they do not quite suit you. I do not think that, as a rule, we can worship in words used by the ancients, by those who thought and felt so differently from us. But if we at all use their words, we have no right to change them in order that they may suit our changed thoughts and sentiments.

However, to come to the remaining parts of the Maharshi's liturgy. The sixth part is called *prárthaná* and is made up of a general prayer drawn up by the Maharshi and the well-known prayer "*Asato má sadgamaya,*" etc., which really consists of three distinct texts, two from the *Upanishads* and one from the *Rigveda* put together in the shape of a single prayer; it is followed by a translation. The seventh part is

called *svádhyáya* and consists of a collection of texts from the *Upanishads*. The eighth and the concluding part is called *Upásanhárah* and consists of an indirect prayer from the *Svetāsvataropanishad* with a translation thereof. Now, there can be no doubt that the Maharshi's form of service is a great improvement upon the Rájá's, specially as it admitted of still further improvement; but in addition to the common disadvantage under which all liturgies labour, namely, that in using them the words uttered precede rather than follow the thoughts and feelings, if at all the latter do come, which may or may not be the case, the particular defect of this improved liturgy is the same in kind, though not the same in extent, with that of the Rájá's. The deeper and sweeter relations of the soul to God, which we miss in the one, find indeed some recognition in the latter, but are left without any emphasis. This was perhaps unavoidable, for the Maharshi, no less than the Rájá, in collecting materials for his form of devotions, avoided those sacred writings in which the aspects of piety I refer to had been developed. To remedy the defect mentioned, he should either have gone to those sources or have composed praises and prayers of his own, both of which courses he seems intentionally to have avoided. The defect was partly remedied, however, in both cases, and, in the latter case in a remarkable degree, by the hymns composed in those days, which were sung in the course of the services and became a great source of comfort and edification in private

devotions also. The hymns of Rájá Rámmohan Ráy and his followers in the one period and those of Bábu Satyendranáth Thákur and his brothers in the other, mark two remarkable epochs of spiritual awakening in the history of Bengal. The former mainly call away the mind from the sins and snares of the world and concentrate it on the Supreme Being as our real good and the goal of human existence. The latter speak in touching accents of the love of God for man and of communion with God as the source of supreme and inexhaustible bliss. The Maharshi's *vyákhyánas* or 'expositions' would not have produced the profound effect they did without the hymns composed by his sons, which, themselves the effects of the feelings produced by his teachings, served to deepen the feelings of hundreds of hearts arising from the same source.

However, the defect in the received liturgy just mentioned could not remain unremedied if the Bráhma Samáj were to advance spiritually. No religious body can grow in spirit with the use of mere stereotyped prayers. So the reform came; and it came from the progressive section of the Samáj, the section which eventually separated itself from the parent church and formed itself into the Bráhma Samáj of India. The seeds of the reform, and in fact those of the Bráhma Samáj of India, were sown in an institution called the Sangat or the Sangat Sabhá, (named after similar Sikh assemblies) which has had the most important results in the history of the Bráhma Samáj. The object of the body was to make Bráhmaism a reality in

the life of its members, with mutual help, advice and co-operation. The moving spirit was Kesavchandra Sen. As the result probably of several conferences, this body came to the conclusion that true worship consisted of the following elements: *Árádhaná* (adoration), *Kritajnatá* (thanksgiving), *Dhyána* (meditation or communion), *Anutápá* (repentance), *Prárthaná* (prayer proper) and *Átmasamarpana* (self-consecration). This division of worship into its component elements first appeared in a little book named *Bráhmadharmer Anusthána*, or "the Practice of Bráhmaism," which gave the substance of the conclusions arrived at in the Sangat and which has since gone through several editions. This enumeration of the primary movements of the soul towards God is so very like the enumeration of "religious obligations" in Miss F. P. Cobbe's *Religious Duty*, a book largely read by Bráhmas in those days, that I cannot but think that the Bráhma leaders really took their clue from that gifted writer. Miss Cobbe's enumeration is, in fact, the same as that of the Bráhma leaders, with this slight difference that, in the former, *faith* finds a place among the other obligations and *dhyána* is absent. Gradually, however, our leaders seem to have found out that their division of the elements of worship was not quite logical; and so the list was reduced. *Anutápa* and *Átmasamarpana* were probably felt as included in prayer, and were dropped in the later editions of *Bráhmadharmer Anusthána.* In a little pamphlet giving the form of service in the Bráhma Samáj of India, published

shortly after the establishment of that Samáj, we find the elements of worship enumerated as four, *Arádhaná*, *Kritajnatá*, *Dhyána* and *Prárthaná*. Again it was felt that *Kritajnatá* was comprehended in *Arádhaná* and so in later editions of the *Sámájik Upásaná Pranáli*, or Order of Public Service, *Kritajnatá* was dropped and worship was taught as consisting of three elements, *Arádhaná*, *Dhyána* and *Prárthaná*. In this doctrine the Bráhma Samáj, in its progressive sections, now rests, and it may well do so, for there is a logicalness in this division which cannot be easily questioned. The Maharshi's *archaná*, *pranámah*, *samádhánam* and *stotram* cross and re-cross one another. This cannot be said of the trichotomy of *arádhaná*, *dhyána* and *prárthaná*. They are clearly distinguishable though closely allied attitudes of the soul towards God. By *arádhaná* is meant the praise of God as conceived in all his known attributes,—of God as *satyam*, *jnánam*, *anantam*, the true, the all-knowing, the infinite; *ánandarupam*, *amritam*, *sántam*, as the blissful, the sweet and the peaceful; *sivam*, *advaitam*, the good, the one without a second: and *suddham*, *apápavidham*, as the holy, untouched by sin. The adoration or praise of God as endowed with all these attributes has the effect of clearing our ideas about him, strengthening our faith in him and bringing out and deepening the feelings of awe, reverence, gratitude, love, dependence and the like, which the human soul ought to feel towards the Supreme. *Dhyána*, in its literal sense, is thinking of God, and in this sense accompanies or is identical

with *árádhaná*; but in the Bráhma Samáj it is used in a deeper sense, in the sense in which the *Sástras* use *dháraná* or *samádhi*, the concentration of the mind in God. Hence it comes naturally after *árádhana*, which, by removing the dullness and dryness of the heart that stand between it and God, reveals him to it in his sublimity and in the beauty of his goodness and holiness. The place of *prárthaná* or prayer proper, as the third of the soul's movements towards God, is also sufficiently clear. The wants of the soul, the defects and shortcomings which keep us from that abiding communion with God which is our ideal, are best seen when we are face to face with the perfectly holy One. Well may the unspiritual, those who do not habitually adore God and concentrate their minds in him, say that they do not feel the need of prayer. Darkness is visible only in contrast with light. A soul quite unillumined by the presence of God naturally fails to see its own darkness. On the other hand, it is when the presence of God and his relation to us is most deeply felt that our prayers become most fervent and prove most efficacious. It will thus be seen that the Bráhma doctrine of worship, as consisting of the three elements of *árádhaná*, *dhyána* and *prárthaná*, embodies a good deal of spiritual wisdom and is based on a true insight into the requirements of the soul. As I have said in my *Religion of Brahman*: "Faith, love and holy desire being the very essence of religion, these three acts of devotion will be found to be excellently calculated to foster these essential elements of spiritual

life. *Árádhaná* and *dhyána* have the direct effect of deepening faith in God, of awakening a consciousness of his relation to us, and of arousing those feelings of reverence, gratitude, admiration and humble dependence on God which constitute the proper attitude of our souls towards him, while prayer serves effectively to attune our wills to the Divine will and bring down Divine help upon us." (pp. 85, 86.)

Now, it seems to me that the progressive sections of the Bráhma Samáj have satisfactorily solved the problem whether public worship should be conducted through a fixed liturgy or be entirely free and *extempore*. There are evils on both sides. A liturgy is very liable to be recited hurriedly and mechanically and thereby to encourage dryness; while a minister left entirely free to lead the devotions of a congregation by his *extempore* prayers may be too personal in the expression of his feelings, or, praying in a dry, wild and restless manner, may fail altogether to touch the feelings of his brethren. The progressive sections of the Bráhma Samáj have adopted a middle course. They have prescribed an order of service laying down that after *udbodhan* (lit. awakening) or the call to worship, should come *árádhaná*, then *dhyána*, then a general prayer, then the sermon and last of all a special prayer for the particular grace dwelt upon in the sermon. They have also laid down a number of heads on which the meditations of the minister should proceed in going through the solemn exercise of adoration. It is indeed desired that he should

have feelings and awaken feelings in the hearts of his fellow-worshippers, but it is also wanted that his and their feelings should take a fixed channel,—that they should follow the devout contemplation of the attributes of God enumerated in certain texts from the *Upanishads*, or to speak more correctly, should follow the realisation or consciousness of God as endowed with those attributes. These texts are the same as are used in the first portion of the *Samádhánam* of the Ádi Bráhma Samáj liturgy with the addition of another text by the progressive Bráhmas under the Maharshi's advice.

It may be worth while mentioning the exact sources from which these texts are drawn. The first, '*Satyam Jnánam Anantam Brahma*,' is taken from the first verse second *valli*, of the *Taittiríya Upanishad*. The second, '*Ánandarupam Amritam yadvibháti*,' which means—that which shines as bliss, as immortal or as the sweet—is from the seventh verse, second *khanda*, of the second *Mundaka*. The third, *Sántam Sivam Advaitam*,' is from the seventh verse of the *Mándúkya*; and the fourth, '*Suddham Apápaviddham*,' is from the eighth verse of the *Ísá*. These Vedic *mantras* are first uttered in unison by the congregation, and then follows the minister's *extempore* adoration of God on the lines of the conceptions embodied in them. The way in which the congregation is affected by such adoration depends upon the extent to which the minister has made these conceptions his own by private meditations on them and by cultivating the

feelings answering to them. It will thus be seen that the task of a minister under the system we are considering is most arduous and that a great demand is made both upon his thoughtfulness and his fervency of feeling. How our ministers acquit themselves under such a trying system of conducting public service, is a question upon which I am not here required to express my opinion; but I may as well say that, in proportion as their congregations consist of real worshippers as distinguished from mere sight-seers, their devotions no less than their sermons are subjected to a severe criticism. It is evident that, under such a system, those alone can be successful ministers who diligently cultivate *árádhaná* in their private devotions, and cultivate it in the same way in which they are required to conduct it in public service, and that it is only such members of the congregation as adopt the system in their private worship who can enjoy public worship best and are also good judges of the quality, the spiritual depth and sweetness, of the devotions offered by a minister. Hence, the very adoption of this system in public service has had the effect of regulating and deepening the private devotions of the more earnest and zealous members of the Bráhma Samáj. The good which the adoption of this system of *árádhaná* has produced in the lives of devout Bráhmas, in bringing light, sweetness and strength to their souls, is simply incalculable. It will not be too much to say that those who do not enter into the spirit of this system know only the outer crust of

Bráhmaism; they miss the inner struggles, sorrows, aspirations and joys of the Bráhma life.

However, *árádhaná* is followed in our form of worship by *dhyána* or silent meditation. It is really an attempt to realise the direct presence of God in the soul. Of this exercise I say in my *Religion of Brahman*: "*Arádhaná* leads naturally to *dhyána*, *i.e.*, fixing the mind on the object of worship as defined by the above meditations. This attitude of the mind—this meeting of God face to face, as it were, in the inmost chamber of the soul—is a most important discipline. It gives seriousness to the soul, clears its spiritual vision, confirms its faith in the highest truths, and giving it a taste of supersensuous joys, makes worship attractive to it and weans it away from sensual pleasures. It should therefore be cultivated by every worshipper of Brahman with the greatest care." As, however, *dhyána* is a silent exercise, every worshipper being left to cultivate it in the best way he can, it is difficult to speak of the collective experience of the Bráhma Samáj about it. I shall therefore content myself with what I have already said about it till I come to *Yoga* or communion, to which the cultivation of *dhyána* gradually led the advanced members of the Bráhma Samáj of India. I shall close this part of my subject by saying a few words on *prárthaná*. This subject has been very ably dealt with Bábu Nagendranáth Cháturji in the second volume of his *Dharmajijnásá*; and I would refer those who may have intellectual difficulties on the subject to his full and clear exposition. My

remarks on the present occasion will be confined to a repetition of what I have briefly said on the subject in my *Religion of Brahman*. "*Dhyána*", I say in that book, "will naturally lead to *prárthaná*, prayer, the breathing of the soul's highest desires to God, the desire, for instance, for a clear vision of him, for the strength to live constantly in his presence, for deep love to him, and for both internal and external holiness. When there is genuine spiritual thirst in the soul, prayer comes out of it spontaneously, it is felt more as a necessity than a duty, and no doubts arise as to its reasonableness and efficacy. But there are some to whom such doubts are a real difficulty. I would advise persons of this class not to pray till they feel an irresistible impulse to pray, when their doubts will be easily solved. But until that time they should all the more diligently cultivate the other two elements of worship, *árádhaná* and *dhyána*, which are clearly duties arising out of our relation to God. When they have practised these two forms of worship with some success, they will see that the necessities of the spirit will compel them to have recourse to the third form of worship as well. In regard to the usual objection urged against prayer, namely, that in praying to God for this or that thing we really ask him to violate his own laws, it may be briefly said that we need not pray for things the attainment of which we know to be subject to fixed, unalterable laws, be they things physical or spiritual. About these things we may trust that God will work out his will for our good

even without, and often in spite of, our prayers. But there are things of the spirit in regard to which prayer itseif is the law. When we pray for them, we get them; when we do not pray for them, we do not get them. Every spiritually-minded person will find out for himself what these things are. For such things prayer is a necessity and therefore a duty. It is for this that we see prayer forming such an important part in the spiritual exercises of every devout person."

I have now spoken of the Bráhma Samáj system of worship as fully as I could in the space of a few minutes. Those wishing to have a closer acquaintance with it I must refer to the Bengali tract, named "*Brahmopásaná-pranáli o prárthanámálá*," published by the Sádháran Bráhma Samáj, and a similar English tract published by the Mission Office of the Bráhma Samáj of India. The Ádi Bráhma Samáj order of service will also be found in a little tract published by that Samáj. I shall now speak briefly of some of the other exercises comprised in the Bráhma system of spiritual culture. I have already said something on Bráhma hymns and their effect on the religious life of the Bráhma Samáj and of the country in general. The Bráhma Samáj has been very fortunate in the matter of its singers and musical composers. The days when Bábu Satyendranáth Thákur was the leading singer of the church were followed by the musical ascendancy of Bábu Trailokyanáth Sányál, the 'singing apostle' of the

Bráhma Samáj of India, better known to the outside public by his assumed name of Chiranjíva Sarmá. The effect produced by the melodious voice and the rich musical compositions of this gifted Bráhma missionary on all those who have come under his influence, is simply incalculable. He stands to the great Brahmánanda in the same relation as Babu Satyendranáth Thákur stands to the Maharshi. Kesavchandra's touching and beautiful delineations of the love of God for man, and his lofty teachings on *Yoga*, *Bhakti* and *Vidhán*, could not have produced the profound effect they did but for the help lent them by the melting hymns composed by his devoted disciple under the inspiration of his sermons, and often quite *in prompto.* Another movement in devotional music has been led by Bábu Ravindranáth Thákur, the eminent Bengali poet, the youngest son of the Maharshi. He may be said to be the leading musical composer of the day, and his influence on the hearts of Bráhmas and others more or less connected with the Bráhma Samáj is certainly the greatest at the present day. Not being under the inspiration of any great preacher like the Maharshi or the Brahmánanda, but led only by the inner workings of his soul, he must be regarded as more original in his musical productions than the musical leaders whose labours have preceded his work, as also he is certainly the most cultured and refined of them. But this, which is an advantage from one point of view, is a disadvantage from another. The effect produced by his hymns is likely to pass away

sooner than desirable, as the sentiments breathed by them do not fall under a system and are not backed by the persuasive power of the teachings of a great preacher.

After *sangítas* or ordinary hymns come *sankírtanas*, the peculiar form of musical compositions introduced by the school of Chaitanya, the great Vaishnava reformer of Bengal. They are hymns mostly in praise of God, composed in popular language and set to light airs which easily touch the heart and fire the imagination. They are usually sung in chorus and to the accompaniment of the *khol* and the *kartál*. They were introduced into the Bráhma Samáj by the late Pandit Vijaykrishna Gosvámi, one of the first of Bráhma missionaries and long an honoured leader of the Bráhma Samáj. They have had the profoundest influence on Bráhma devotions and have, perhaps more than anything else, served to popularise our services. They may be said to be the one link of close connection between the Bráhma Samáj and the uneducated or half-educated masses of our countrymen. Those who cannot follow our preaching, those who do not even appreciate our hymns set to classical music, feel the power of our *sankírtanas* and are profited and feel spiritually drawn to the Bráhma Samáj by joining in or listening to them.

As to the other *sádhans* enjoined by the Bráhma Samáj, I have time simply to mention some of them till I come to *yoga*, of which I shall speak in some detail. They are *átmachintá* and *átmaparíkshá*,

introspection and self-examination; *námajapa* and *námasádhana*, devoutly uttering the names of God and realising God in those attributes which these names convey; and *svádhyáya* or *sástrapátha*, the devout study of sacred books. These and other minor exercises you will find dealt with in detail in the following books:—*Bráhmadharmer Anusthána*, already mentioned by me; *Dharmasádhana* in three volumes published by Bábu Umeshchandra Datta; *Yoga* and *Brahmagítopanishad* by Kesavchandra Sen; *Sadhana-bindu*, *Gleams of the New Light*, *Whispers from the Inner Life*, and *Brahmasádhan* by the present speaker; *Jívanta o Mrita Dharma*, edited by the late Bábu Ádi-tyakumár Chaturji; and *Dharmasádhan* by Bábu Lalitmohan Dás. Of sermons for devout study, those most worth mention are the *Vyákhyánas* of the Maharshi, *Ácháryer Upadesha* and *Sevaker Nivedana* by the Brahmánanda, and *Dharmajívana* by Pandit Siva-náth Sástri.

I now come to treat briefly of the Bráhma system of *Yoga* or *Communion*, which represents the high-water mark of Bráhma *sádhan* or spiritual culture. As I have already said, the Bráhma practice of *dhyána* led naturally to the desire for a direct realisation of God's presence and to an inquiry into the teachings of the Hindu scriptures on the subject. The result was the formulation of a system, partly in harmony with and partly differing from the sástric system. Kesav's system is seen in its first draft in his *Brahmagítopanishad*; it comes out in its fulness

in his posthumous essay on *Yoga*. Kesavchandra conceives *yoga* as threefold. These three forms of *yoga* he calls successively Vedic or objective *yoga*, Vedantic or subjective *yoga*, and Pauránik or *bhakti yoga*. By Vedic or objective *yoga*, he means the realisation of God as the one Power or Will behind natural phenomena. I think this sort of 'realising' God falls short of true realisation, inasmuch as he is conceived as a Power *behind* phenomena. The true vison of God in Nature is not attained until these phenomena are identified with God and recognised as *his* appearances. This Kesavchandra could not do consistently with his Scotch Dualism or what remained of it in him in spite of the pro-Vedántic tendency of his latter days. Nature yet remained to him something of a reality distinct from God and prevented the full and legitimate development of his system of *yoga*. However, the second form of *yoga* taught by him is Vedantic or subjective *yoga*, the realisation of God as the soul of our souls. In his delineation of this devout exercise he approaches most nearly the inner aspect of Vedantism. He sees that in the vision of God in the soul nothing is seen which is not divine and he speaks even of the utter annihilation of self in God. But there being no definite system of philosophy behind what he says, it may be doubted whether the unity he sees is the fundamental unity of consciousness, which is the only real unity, or merely that superficial unity of force which science professes to see. Regarding the *distinction* also, of

which he speaks, it is doubtful whether it is the irresolvable distinction of the manifested and the Unmanifested or only that spurious distinction which is created by the popular dread of Pantheism and Monism. However, as far as he went in this direction, Kesavchandra's services in re-establishing the almost broken unity of the theistic thought of ancient and modern India by his latter-day teachings on *Yoga*, are very valuable and are fraught with important consequences for the future. However, we come thirdly to his idea of Pauránik or *bhakti yoga*, by which he means the realisation of the Divine activity in history, both individual and social. Kesavchandra has not developed this third form of Pauránik *yoga* in the essay I have referred to. I understand that he had the idea of doing so in a distinct treatise ; but he did not live to carry out his intention. However, from his previous teachings on the love of God, on the culture of *bhakti* and on the doctrine of Divine dispensations, we can gather in part what his teachings on Pauránik *yoga* would have been. According to him every individual's life is a field of direct Divine activity, every event in it being determined by the Divine love. Every life is a *jivana-veda*, a direct revelation of God, so that one has only to look within and study his own life to learn how God deals with man. But the history of nations and churches has an important message for us. The lives of the great founders of religions particularly are special manifestations of God. Such men came, under Divine dis-

pensation, to teach us special truths and exemplify special features of the spiritual life. Such lives should therefore be carefully studied and the truths and graces illustrated by them assimilated by a special course of *sádhan* or spiritual culture. I put Kesavchandra's idea as briefly as I can. The brevity of my statement may conceal the grave significance of his teachings,—an effect which I would try to prevent if I could. The importance he attached to the study of historical religion and to the systematic culture of the aspects of practical religion brought to light or emphasised in the various systems, constitutes one of the special features of his teachings and distinguishes his Theism and that of those who agree with him from that bald Deism which goes by the name of 'theism' in Europe and has its counterpart here also in this country, even within the fold of the Bráhma Samáj. It seems to me that the spiritual progress of the Bráhma Samáj is, to a large extent, bound up with the acceptance of the substance of Kesav's teachings on Paurânik or *bhakti yoga.* The term 'Paurânik' should not mislead us. By it Kesav meant 'historical' and not 'mythical'. What the writers of the Purânas did with mythical, imaginary persons, he teaches us to do with real historical persons. And he further teaches us that the whole of history may be repeated in our personal lives. What Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, Chaitanya and others saw, felt and did, we also may see, feel and do, through the spirit of God work-

ing in us. The endeavour to do this he called *sádhu samágama* or communion with saints. We may reject some of the methods he adopted in realising such communion. But we must accept the substance of his teaching if we would be faithful to the liberal spirit of true Bráhmaism.

My address is already prolonged beyond the extent to which I meant to confine it; but I hope you will bear with me a few minutes more while I say a few words on the contribution of the Sádháran Bráhma Samáj to the system of Bráhma *sádhan*. This contribution is not *nil*, as its enemies and even some of its short-sighted friends represent. Apart from the accentuation of the Bráhma doctrine of spiritual liberty by its constitutional form of church government, and the practical realisation of the Bráhma ideal of equality by the same method and by the promotion of high education among women and their co-operation in the management of the church, the important contribution it has made to the philosophy of Bráhmaism has really had the effect of correcting and developing the system of *yoga* of which I have just spoken. Those who have understood my remarks on Kesavchandra's Objective and Subjective *Yoga* must also understand what I say now. To us the phenomena of Nature are not, as they were to him, anything distinct from God. They are, to us, direct manifestations of him and not mere signs of a Power behind. So, in subjective *yoga*, we perhaps see the fundamental unity of consciousness more clearly than he did; and it will be seen by close observers

that this unity is preached from our pulpits and platforms far more boldly and confidently than he ever did. And perhaps also the dread of Pantheism does not haunt us so much as it did him and his close followers. We have learnt how to reconcile our Idealistic Theism with the Dualism implied in moral and spiritual life. We have practised this reconciliation for several years and are somewhat assured of our success. The effect of all this has been on the one hand a deepening of our devotions and on the other the establishment of a closer link than Kesavchandra could establish between our ancient systems of *sádhan* and that of the Bráhma Samaj. But perhaps many of you will say, "Where are these results? We don't see them." You don't see them, I answer, partly because you are not sufficiently observant and are occupied mostly with the outer side of the life of the Samáj, and partly because these results are yet confined only to a few. But this latter fact, namely, that these results are confined only to a few members of the Samáj, should not prevent one from speaking of them. All higher developments, either of knowledge, feeling, spiritual life or even social reform, are confined to a small vanguard in every community, and yet they regulate and determine, more or less directly or indirectly, the life of the community and have to be spoken of in telling its history. Kesav's system of *yoga* is not, I fear, familiar to many of those who call themselves his followers; and yet it must be spoken of in all statements of the Bráhma system of *sádhan.*

Even our system of worship, as I said at the beginning of this lecture, is known only to a small fraction of the hundreds that throng this *mandir*, and is not accepted even by many old Bráhmas; and yet we speak of it as the Bráhma Samáj system of worship. In the same manner, therefore, I am not wrong, I hope, in claiming that the Sádháran Bráhma Samáj has given the country a new system of *yoga*, one which is, on the one hand, in harmony with the deepest philosophy of the West and, on the other, a continuation of the highest Hindu system of *sádhan*, with its errors avoided and its truths made to fit in with modern tastes and ideals. Those who cannot detect this system in our public addresses and devotions, I refer to our religious literature, specially to the books written by our leading men. A careful study of them will reveal the outlines of the system I speak of. May these outlines become clearer and clearer day by day and be filled in by a growing depth and fullness of spiritual life !

LECTURE XI

The Brahma Samaj and Social Reform

I need hardly tell you that Theism is not a new thing in India, that we have not learnt it from either the Musalmans or the Christians, though some ill-informed people think we have done so. Theism was taught in the earliest Hindu scripture, the *Rigveda* ; and in our later sacred books it has been developed and elaborated into a refined and exalted form scarcely to be met with in any other ethnic scriptures. In this matter the Bráhma Samáj has nothing new to teach the country, but has yet much to learn from its sacred literature. In this respect it is a revival movement—a movement endeavouring to remind the people of India of truths which their ancestors knew, but which they have well nigh forgotten. The only reform needed in this department of our work is to free our old Theism from unscientific associations and show its perfect harmony with modern science.

But though the Theism of the Brâhma Samáj is old in so far as it is a philosophical doctrine, it is almost entirely a new thing on its practical side. Even as a doctrine, the old Theism of India, as the old Theism of Judea and Greece, did not exclude the

supposition of minor deities. There may have been isolated thinkers who did not believe in the gods. But Theists, both here and elsewhere, then generally held the doctrine of a plurality of gods and goddesses, conceiving the Infinite to be the God of gods. Now, modern Theism differs from the ancient in rejecting this minor theology, or "polytheism", as it is wrongly called. Modern science shows the falsity of the divisions of Nature imagined by the ancients and thus reduces "polytheism" to mythology. But it cannot be said that the supposition of beings higher than man and having greater powers over Nature than man possesses, is entirely excluded by science. Nor can it be said that Theism itself is opposed to the notion of a plurality of minor deities having essentially the same relation to the Supreme Being as man and the lower animals. The conception of a plurality of superhuman created beings is no more untheistic than the conception of a plurality of men and lower creatures. Those, therefore, who still hold to the doctrine of a plurality of gods and goddesses under an infinite and eternal God of gods, are no more "polytheists", in the proper sense of the word, than the *rishis* of the *Upanishads,* the prophets of Judea or the philosphers of ancient Greece. When the oneness and infinitude of a Supreme Being is recognised, it matters nothing, so far as Theism is concerned, how many classes of created beings are recognised by a Theist.

But the practical difference of old Theism, believ-

ing in a plurality of minor deities under one Supreme Being, from modern scientific Theism, which admits only one Supreme Deity, is even more important than the theoretical. The ancients believed not only that the gods existed, but that they required to be worshipped, to be propitiated by offerings and prayers. And what were these offerings? They were such as even the least wise of civilised men would now reject with scorn and disgust,—beasts, birds, fruits, cakes and *ghee* burnt in fire! The spiritually enlightened writer of the *Bhagavadgítá* insists upon these rites to the gods being continued even in the case of the most advanced Theists. Jesus Christ does not think such offerings to be quite unworthy of his Father in Heaven; and Muhammad considered that his Theism required quite a host of camels and other animals to be sacrificed in the name of Alla after his conquest of and re-entrance into Mecca. Sacrifices therefore continued long, both here and elsewhere, even after the formulation of of Theism; and in India, from the time of the decline of Buddhism and the revival of Hinduism, images were introduced to help the realisation of the presence of the gods and perhaps to strengthen people's waning faith in the existence of these fancied beings. Those who introduced these innovations were perhaps themselves believers in the gods; for we find even such reformers and revivalists as Sankara and Rámánuja, in spite of their refined ideas, countenancing idolatry and even taking part in idolatrous rites. They can scarcely be blamed; for they actually believed in the

gods and even thought that the Supreme Being himself took human or other forms and accepted material offerings. They had, indeed, a clear idea of purely spiritual worship, and considered *that* to be the goal of all worshippers ; but they thought that the worship of images with material offerings was a necessary means of spiritual progress and the medium through which men should rise to spiritual worship. As they sincerely believed in this, their connection with idolatry cannot be represented as a hypocritical, cowardly or even politic compromise with error and untruth. It proceeded from pure conviction, and was not anyway degrading to their souls. There were indeed unbelievers in the gods, unbelievers even in the Supreme Being, in ancient times, who nevertheless kept up their connection with orthodox society as a matter of policy. But such thinkers were exceptions ; the great majority even of advanced thinkers were believers in minor deities, in the incarnation of the Supreme Being, and in the efficacy of image-worship.

But now all this is changed. Muhammadanism and Christianity have not indeed taught us Theism, but they have taught us and demonstrated to us—what Christianity did to civilised, philosophical but idolatrous Greece and Rome—that even the simplest person can approach the Infinite with his love, reverence, vows and aspirations without the intervention of images or material offerings. Bráhmaism, we confess, is outlandish, it is Musalman or Christian, in respect of the highly practical, spiritual, icono-

clastic turn it has given to the old Theism of India. Our old monotheistic religion was good enough as an affirmation, a thesis; but it sadly needed a negative and antithetical turn. This the Bráhma Samáj has given it; and in this consists its main contribution to the religious development of India. The Bráhma Samáj has been, from its very beginning, opposed to idolatry, though it has taken time to formulate in full its scheme of religious and social reform.

"Invite *me* to an idolatrous ceremony!"—said the great founder of the Bráhma Samáj to young Devendranáth, when he, on one occasion, went, deputed by his father, to invite the reformer to the Durgápújá celebration in his house. "*Me!*"—the spiritual worshipper of the Invisible! What ancient reformer of India spoke with such fire and emphasis? This "*me!*" rang in Devendranáth's ear all his life, as he himself has told us, and led him to organise—what the Rája was not permitted to do—the real Bráhma Samáj or society on a purely unidolatrous basis. And well did his worthy son, Rabíndranáth, keep up the noble tradition of his family when, on being invited to join in the Siváji festival celebrated last year (1906) in Calcutta, wrote in reply that not even a stripling of the Maharshi's family would join in a festival in which an idol was worshipped. It is this deep sense of sin and degradation, as attached to idolatry in the case of a Theist not believing either in the gods or in the efficacy of material offerings, that first leads a Bráhma to be a reformer; and it is

the absence or the defectiveness of this sense in the generality of educated Indians that keeps them away from the Bráhma Samáj inspite of their Theism. What dulls this sense and obstructs its growth? What is the cause that keeps thousands and ten thousands of Theists in the country from joining the Bráhma Samáj? Let us see. This cause is partly moral and partly intellectual, the former, as it seems to me, preponderating over the latter. A thoughtful writer in the *Bangadarshan*, writing about two years ago (in 1905) on the degraded social condition of Bengal, assigned it mainly to "the atrophy of the moral sense," as the fundamental vice of our people. It is the fundamental vice, not only of Bengalis, but of Indians in general. Individuality is so little developed in us, that in this respect we are but children, compared with the brave and robust races of the West. We habitually fear to differ with our neighbours, and when we do differ with them, we take good care to hide our difference. We are afraid, not only of our elders and guides—the natural leaders of our society, —but even of our equals and inferiors. As it is facetiously remarked ot the Bengali, he is afraid, not only of his father and mother, but even of his *tempi pishi*—the tiny sister or cousin of his father. The Indian, in fact, never becomes socially independent. Manu says of women—"She is subject to her father in childhood, to her husband in youth and maturity, and to her sons in old age." So may it be said of the typical Indian, that he is subject to his father in

childhood and youth, to his friends in maturity, and to his neighbours and subordinates in his old age. The tyranny of society overpowers his individuality and keeps it under constant check. He is taught from his very infanthood that religion consists in conforming to established usage. He is never taught to think freely or to act freely. Generally he is quite ignorant of the free-thought which characterised Indian philosophers and of the occasional and mostly abortive free activity of ancient Indian reformers. He is, on the other hand, constantly taught that even the wisest men of the country have chosen to conform to popular usage. An old uncle of mine, a gentleman who was noted for his piety, used to repeat, now and again in order to check my youthful ardour for social reform, the inspiring couplet,—

"*Yadi yogí trikálajnah samudra-langhana-kshamah,*
Tathápi laukikácháram manasápi na langhayet."

That is, "Though one may be a *yogi*, all-knowing and able to leap over the sea, yet he should not, even in thought, go against popular usage." That is the teaching which the Indian receives in his most impressionable years from those to whom his education is entrusted. As a rule, he is never taught anything of *that* in him which gives rise to and therefore transcends all social usage. He learns nothing of that doctrine of Conscience which one meets with at every turn in Christian society and Christian literature. Lately, with the introduction of English education, he has indeed been hearing a good deal about free-thought

and individual freedom, of the struggle between reformers and society and of the persecution and heroic death of thousands of Christian martyrs. But apart from the fact that, in public schools, he meets with such teaching only as so much literature, and that it is never sought to be impressed upon him by his teachers,—apart from this defective teaching, I say —even the slight impression made by such teaching is more than neutralised by the more powerful influence of domestic teaching and example, by what the young people learn from the precepts and practical lives of their relatives and friends. They learn that the courage and freedom of moral heroes and reformers is good enough only as illustrations to be used in the essays they may write as students and the addresses they may deliver as public speakers, but not at all good for imitation in domestic and social life. *There* they must always remain slaves of custom—slaves of ignorant women and selfish priests —however refined their own ideas may be, and however great the admiration they may show, in their political speeches and *swadeshi* demonstrations, of the free institutions of Christian countries. They would directly learn from their teachers and professors, if they would only question them, that liberal ideas are only to be talked about and "demonstrated," but never carried out into action; and, as to their guardians, there can be no mistake whatever of what they wish them to do. All freedom of action is systematically starved out and killed by the very eco-

nomy of Indian homes and Indian society,—freedom of action, not only in matters religious, but in secular matters also. How many grown-up young men we meet with—men who are graduates of Indian universities—who do not know what they will do with themselves when they leave college! "We shall do what our guardians say"—is their habitual answer to every query about their future career. We read sometime ago of a distinguished Indian scholar who could not avail himself of a splendid opportunity to visit Europe because he could not get the consent of his orthodox relatives to this bold step. We then read of Mr. Tyagarájan, the Senior Wrangler, who, it is said, could not follow his own natural bent in choosing his future career, because his father wished him to enter the legal profession. These are only occasional and rather slight but not insignificant indications of the abject social tyranny under which the Indian lives. The fear of unpopularity, of persecution, of social excommunication, haunts him from childhood to old age and keeps him ever a coward or a hypocrite, or both. Conscience, disregarded and dishonoured at every step, speaks in him less and less every day till it sinks into practical silence. God is dethroned from the heart, and "what people say" becomes the average Indian's only object of worship. Bráhmaism calls upon us to shake off this double idolatry of custom and dead images. It calls upon us with a voice which seems yet "still and small," but which will, at no distant date, grow into a trumpet's call and rouse the whole nation.

Every convert to Bráhmaism must have passed through a period of moral struggle,—a struggle between his newly gained convictions, which have demanded from him a line of conduct strictly in accordance with them, and the opinions of his friends and relatives who have opposed such conduct. Those who have gained in this struggle have firmly stood up for truth, have allowed candour and straightforward action to prevail over prudent and politic conformity to custom,—have become what we call *ánusthánik* Bráhmas. If they have perserved in this course of following truth and right in the teeth of opposition from those whose only rule of life is 'what their neighbours say,' they have not only become social reformers, but have gradually succeeded in completely establishing the kingdom of God over their whole lives—in their inner feelings and desires as well as their outward conduct. On the other hand, the moral history of those who, in this parting of ways, take the other path, has been very different. That this choice of roads is offered to all whose conscience is awakened, who, from the mere natural or animal life of desires, wake to the inner and higher life of duties and ideals, admits of no doubt. It is also undoubted that if the other road is taken, if the Theist deliberately chooses to put his light under a bushel and follow prudence and expediency, he cannot rest where he is at this critical period of his life. The light which he puts away will, by the laws of the inner life, gradually cease to appear as a light to him. Truth, candour and

straightforwardness, which now seem virtues to him and which now sting him for not following them, will by and by seem to him to be no virtues at all, and the sting in his soul will be healed little by little —healed, not by any really health-giving remedy, but by the opiate of moral dullness and insensibility. Things which he now judges to be right will gradually seem to him wrong, and things which seem right now will by and by appear to him in a different light. Acute suffering, whether physical and moral, cannot endure indefinitely; it must subside after a time either by destroying the organism or making it insensible.

This, it seems to me, is the explanation of the conduct of those who, though Theists in faith, not only conform to idolatrous conduct, but also defend such conduct by arguments. Their arguments are an after-thought, following, not preceding, their choice of the road to be followed. Shrinking from the painful consequences of moral and religious consistency, afraid to incur the displeasure of friends, relatives and neighbours and to bear the brunt of social persecution and excommunication, they have chosen to shun the 'strait' and follow the 'broad' way, and now the intellect follows the outraged and depraved conscience and invents arguments to show that, after all, what seemed *right* is really *wrong*, and what seemed *wrong* is really *right*. I had once a talk with a Theist, a rather earnest sympathiser with the Bráhma movement who yet retained his sacrifical thread. He asked

me on what grounds the members of the Bráhma Samáj objected to a Bráhma's retaining the thread. My answer was, "I shall gladly state those grounds one after another; but please tell me if, on being convinced that my grounds are valid, you are prepared to give up your thread." The frank confession of the other party was, "I cannot say; in fact, I am not prepared." On which I rather bluntly said, "Then you will kindly excuse me if I spare myself the trouble of arguing the matter with you." If every Theist conforming to orthodox practice were as frank as the one just mentioned, we might perhaps be spared most, if not all, of the arguments one hears in favour of such conformity. Such arguments are all vitiated by the one common characteristic of proceeding, at the first instance, not from an erring understanding, but from a weak, trembling heart. In a sense, therefore, they are unanswerable. The opposed arguments fail to convince those who are under their spell. In so far as they are addressed to the under standing, they fail to touch the heart, where the real fallacy lurks. They can succeed only so far as they, under the guise of arguments, are really appeals to the moral sense of those to whom they are addressed. With this introduction, then, let us consider some of the arguments that we hear against Bráhma ideals of social reform—at the first instance against breaking away from idolatrous practice on the part of a Theist.

The argument most commonly heard in favour

of the conformity of the heterodox to orthodox practice, is that a reformer thrown out of orthodox society and in so far deprived of the sympathies of the orthodox, would be powerless or all but powerless to introduce reforms into that society, and that one whom the members of that society consider their own would be more likely to be heard and followed by them. Now, this argument ignores the very first principle from which reform proceeds. That principle is, in the case in question, not that the orthodox should practise heterodoxy, but that the heterodox, since orthodoxy has become so much error to them, should not practise it, but be true to their own convictions,—act up to the new ideal of life revealed to them. For the believer in idolatry idolatry is not a sin, but rather a duty. In practising it, he follows only his own idea of truth and right, and cannot be blamed for doing so. The Theist may, and indeed should, in the best way known to him, try to lead the Idolator away from his idolatrous belief and teach him the worship of the true God in spirit and in truth. But so long as one continues to be an Idolator in belief, the Theist should not call upon him to give up idolatrous practice. But very different is the case with himself. While idolatrous practice does not demean the Idolator, it is really demeaning and sinful to the Theist. To lay down, therefore, that as long as his idolatrous neighbour has not seen the error of his idolatry, the Theist should remain an Idolator in

practice, is really to say that one should go on sinning and demeaning himself so long as his neighbour is not converted to his belief. But if the Theist can thus go on practising idolatry with the hope of some day joining hands with his idolatrous neighbour, it does not seem that it can ever be necessary for him to bring about his contemplated reform. If reform can be postponed in the case of the individual, why not also in the case of society? If it is proper for individuals to practise things they do not believe, why should it be improper for societies to do so? If we may practise and put up with hypocrisy for generations with the hope that *some day* we shall be in a position to put it away, does not the very necessity of putting it away cease? If hypocrisy may, without harm, continue indefinitely, what harm can there be in its perpetuation? The fallacy of the argument is therefore patent, and patent also is its baneful effect on character in dulling the sense of sin. What, moreover, it assumes as to the sympathy of society with reformers keeping themselves within its fold, is not true. From persons whose consciences are not awakened, or those who are confirmed in hypocrisy, the reformer clinging to his old ways indeed gets a sort of sympathy and exercises on them a certain degree of influence, and all this at the cost of his own moral nature; but from simple, conscientious, and straightforward men, such a reformer receives nothing but contempt. It is easily found out by such men that he is a coward and hypocrite, showing

himself to be what he is not and shrinking from the painful consequences of honest, straightforward action. The influence of such a man on the society he belongs to cannot be great. Really honest and pious people see that this influence actually makes for dishonesty and impiety, and not for virtue and piety. Instances may indeed be cited in which such halting reformers have introduced reforms in the societies to which they belong. But their success is due, not to their apostacy, but to the faithfulness of their persecuted and excommunicated brethren. It is the bold teaching of new truths that draws men's attention to them ; and it is the bravery with which they are carried out into practice by intrepid reformers in the face of opposition and persecution, that breaks the teeth of bigotry and intolerance and paves the way for timid and half-hearted reformers. Example teaches better than precept. The advocates of conformity practically forget this common but invaluable adage.

That Theists who conform to idolatrous practice are looked upon by the orthodox with contempt and distrust, may be illustrated by an incident which happened within my own experience. An excommunicated Bráhma was once hard pressed by his castemen to go through an expiation ceremony, or at any rate, to say that he had gone through something like it, so that they might again be at liberty to associate with him socially. One shift after another was proposed to him in order to make the burden upon his conscience as light as possible ; but

he stoutly refused to compromise himself in the least, —to encourage even the shadow of a lie. He added that if he consented to act as his castemen asked him to do, they would themselves despise him for his cowardice and faithlessness to his principles. His castemen made loud protestations, saying they would do nothing of the kind. But the very next day, one of them showed how very right the Bráhma was in gauging their real feeling for him. One of his castemen who had tempted him in the manner aforesaid happened to be his creditor in respect of a paternal debt of rupees one thousand,— a debt of honour not attested by any legal document. The creditor had been not without misgiving as to the realisation of his money. But the Bráhma's firmness in sticking to his principles in the face of great opposition and persecution, and his declaration that he would not swerve an inch from the path of truth, scattered his misgivings and he said to one who had been present at the conference,—"Whatever the other members of his joint-family may do, I am now assured that as long as this Bráhma is living my money is safe. But if he had consented to act as we wanted him to do, I should have lost my faith in him." Now, a confirmation of this faith of orthodox people in the unswerving integrity of a Bráhma will be found wherever a true Bráhma lives among orthodox people. They abuse and persecute him, but nevertheless trust and respect him above all other men, knowing full well that his virtue has

gone through a sure test—that of unpopularity and excommunication—and can therefore be relied on. On the other hand, those who have sacrificed their principles to popularity, comfort and convenience, have, it is seen, failed in the test proposed to them and made themselves liable to distrust and suspicion.

Now, by what I have just said, I do not mean to lay down that one would be justified in leaving the society one belongs to for any and every difference with his people. There may be differences of principle and practice in a society which do not affect individual conduct. Every progressive society contains men who see truths and ideals of life not revealed to others. If they are allowed to follow those truths and ideals, there is no reason why they should leave their communities. All communities, however enlightened, have in them customs or practices which seem objectionable to a wiser minority of its members. If the latter are not constrained to follow these evil practices, they should surely remain in their communities and endeavour to reform them. If the fundamental principles of a society are sound, and there is room enough in it for its progressive members to breathe and move freely, it is indeed the duty of the latter to continue in it and help their more backward brethren to move on. But as to orthodox Hindu society, Idolatry and Caste lie at its very foundation. In respect of these, there is no room in it for individual liberty. On the occasion of every important domestic ceremony, such, for instance, as *játakarma*, *námakaran*,

upanayan, *vidyárambha*, *díkshá*, marriage and *Śráddha*, you *must* worship an idol or make offerings to the sacred fire, and call in a priest of the Bráhmana caste to conduct the ceremony. Besides, in eating and drinking you must observe caste rules and not interdine or intermarry with people—though they may be objects of your deepest love and respect—who do not belong to your own caste. The inevitable consequence is that those who have ceased to believe in Idolatry and Caste come into conflict, at every step, with the very fundamental principles of the society and are cast out of it if they venture to violate those principles. They could not remain in it without being cowards or hypocrites. They indeed win, by their conduct, the name of *revolutionaries* rather than *reformers*; but in the case of a society of which the very fundamental principles are objectionable, such as make conscientious conduct impossible for its progressive members, it is *revolution*, that is radical change, and not *reformation*, that is superficial or partial change, which is necessary. Whenever Hindu society may give up Idolatry and Caste, even though it may be very slowly and in the course of centuries, its giving up these practices will amount to a revolution, for they lie at its very root. Its foundations were laid when people believed in Idolatry, Sacrifices and Caste. These foundations are unsuitable for the present age, when enlightened men in thousands are giving up these superstitions. They must either be pulled down and purer and more enduring foundations laid in their stead, or a reformed

society must be established on such foundations. As the former course is impossible, the Bráhmas have chosen the latter. They have found orthodox society unsuitable for them; for in it those only are free who are ignorant, thoughtless and unscientific, whereas those who have imbibed the highest culture and enlightenment of the age are under bondage, without the liberty of acting according to their convictions. The establishment of a free and reformed society like the Bráhma Samáj is therefore a necessity, however painful this necessity may seem to some. If you call it an entirely new society, and the Bráhmas daring innovators, they accept the honour or the censure implied in this judgment, though it may be shewn that the fundamental principles of this society, the spiritual worship of God and the rejection of caste distinctions, are really Hindu principles, in the sense that they are the teachings of scriptures universally honoured by the nation. As the founder of the Bráhma Samáj himself thought, current Hinduism is only a distorted form of the purer Hinduism of the *Upanishads.*

Now, one defence of Idolatry offered by half-hearted Theists is that it is so much symbolism and therefore should not be roughly handled, but rather made the best of. The images of the various gods and goddesses are, they say, only representations of the different attributes or aspects of the Divine nature and are thus helps to our realisation of the Divine presence. Now, the first thing to be said in reply to this argument is that there are many Hindu gods and goddesses which

are not representations of any Divine attributes or aspects of the Divine nature. They are really representations of historical or mythical persons deified by the popular imagination. Such are Ráma, Krishna, Balaráma, Chaitanya, Satyapir, Sítá, Sávitrì, Manasá, Śítalá and many others. They are indeed connected somehow or other, in the popular imagination, with the Divine Being, and are supposed, by the more thoughtful of their worshippers, to possess some Divine power or other, but their worship did not arise from symbolism, but is the result of hero-worship or nature-worship. Brahmá, Vishnu, Siva, Durgá, Kálí, Lakshmí, Sarasvatí and such others are indeed more or less symbolic gods and goddesses; but the worship of all of them has a mythological basis, and they are believed by the great majority of their worshippers to be embodied persons having histories of their own. But taking for granted that to the learned and the thoughtful they are nothing more than symbols, the next question is, whether they are, in any sense or degree, adequate symbols of the powers and attributes of the Deity. When one has really known what the protecting and preserving power of God is, what his loving providence means, does the image of Vishnu help him any way in realising God's presence? Does not the image rather stand in the way of a true realisation of God's loving care? So, when wisdom has been seen in its true character, the image of Sarasvatí seems to be worse than useless. Supposing for a moment, however, that such images are of any

use in helping spiritual growth, the utmost that can be allowed in their favour is that they should form parts of a drawing-room furniture or the furniture of one's study or prayer room. Why should they be set up in temples and worshipped with offerings of corn, fruits, flowers and meat? Mere symbolism,—however inadequately the symbols may represent the things signified,—is clearly distinguishable from idolatry; and to defend idolatry as nothing but so much symbolism is to confuse two very different things. Symbolism of the right sort is indeed helpful to culture. But whatever symbolism there may be in Hindu idolatry, it is quite unsuitable for us with our enlightened ideas and improved tastes, however suited it may have been to more or less barbarous periods of our history. The symbolism of modern Christian art is far more suitable for us than the barbaric art of our illiterate potters and painters. Select artistic representations from our national history, both political and religious, may prove even more useful to us. But if the image of the naked and horrid Kálí, of the monkey god Hanumán, or the half-elephant god Ganeśa, really helps the spiritual growth of a Theist, he may have these images constantly before his eyes; but to join with the ignorant, the thoughtless and the unspiritual, the victims of priestly selfishness and cupidity, in the ceremonial worship of idols, is either foolishness of the rankest kind, or mere sophistry or hypocrisy admitting of no intellectual or moral support from thoughtful and

conscientious people. As to the ignorant and the unlettered themselves, the examples of Christianity and Islam, of the old monotheistic sects of India, and lastly of the Bráhma Samáj, in which even little children are successfully taught to offer spiritual worship to God without the mediation of images and incarnations, show that idolatry is not necessary as a stepping stone even to them. Even they should be taught to break their idols and worship the true God in spirit and in truth. That idolatry was devised, not to lead people gradually from lower to higher stages of spiritual life, but only to serve the selfish purposes of the priests by keeping the former for ever ignorant and subservient to the latter, is evident from the fact that in current Hinduism there is no provision for leading the worshipper from the worship of images to more spiritual forms of worship. It has the tendency to keep down the intellect to low views of the religious life and to perpetuate idolatry and ceremonialism. This is the reason why, even in the presence of lofty ideas about the Godhead in our higher scriptures, the nation as a whole has remained idolatrous for centuries. It can be saved and led on to higher grades of spiritual life only by the most thorough-going renunciation of all forms of idolatry,—by purging its temples of all vestiges of image-worship and the utter overthrow of the selfish and impious supremacy of the priests.

Now, I have already mentioned and briefly answered the plea that by conforming to orthodox

practices for a while, Theists would really serve gradually to broaden and liberalise the orthodox community, till a time would come when all that they stand for would be accepted by that community and a separate organisation like the Bráhma Samáj would be unnecessary. A few words more on the unreasonableness of this plea seem to be called for. Attention is drawn to the tolerant attitude which the orthodox community is assuming more and more with the course of time towards reforms and reformers. The society which excommunicated Pandit Madanmohan Tarkálankár for sending his daughters to the Bethune School, has now thousands of girls under instruction in public schools. Priests who pronounced unmentionable curses upon those who kept their daughters unmarried beyond the age of ten, have now no scruple to officiate at marriages in which the brides are in all stages of growing womanhood. Caste rules on interdining are often violated even in public dinners ; and yet no notice is taken of such heterodoxy by the orthodox. People who have travelled in Europe and other foreign lands, are sometimes received back into the orthodox pale even without any expiation ceremony being performed. The re-marriage of widows and marriages between different sections of the same caste do not at present excite that bitter opposition which they used to do a few decades back.* Do not such instances show,

* The Suddhi and Sangathan movements lately inaugurated and carried on with more or less vigour by the different "Hindu Sabhas,"

it is asked, that orthodox society is reforming itself by its own inherent strength, and that it is in no need of the revolutionary activity of the Bráhmas and others who impatiently leave its pale because it does not move as fast as they wish it to do? Now, my reply to this question is as follows: First, the tolerant attitude of orthodox society to reforms and reformers which is made so much of, is entirely confined to big cities like Calcutta and their vicinity. It does not exist in towns and villages remote from these centres of enlightenment. Secondly, the state of things pictured is by no means one which should gladden the heart of a really moral and religious man. Toleration by the orthodox, in their own community, of practices which they yet believe to be opposed to their religion, betrays a state of moral rottenness and imbecility which no true friend of virtue can look upon without horror and disgust. Thirdly, the claim that the orthodox community is reforming itself by its own inherent power and owes nothing to the revolutionary activity of the Bráhmas reminds me of two little stories which I feel disposed to tell you, as they bring out most clearly the fallacy of this claim. An old Irish woman is represented to have said, "I don't know why people give the sun so much praise

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are serving in a remarkable way to liberalise and broaden Hindu-society. Non-Hindus are being converted to Hinduism and people of the higher castes are publicly partaking of food distributed by the converts. "The removal of untouchability," not the entire abolition of the caste system, is the objective of the movements.

and the moon so little. The sun rises and begins to give light when there is already light enough, whereas the moon rises and lights up a dark night." The old woman of the story was too simple to see that the light before sunrise proceeds from the sun itself. The arguers I have mentioned are guilty of a like simplicity. They do not see that the reforming activity of people inside the orthodox pale is the reflex action of the activity of those who have been thrown out of that pale. It is the fearless courage of the revolutionists which gives rise to the timid attempts of the half-hearted reformer; and it is the bitter persecution through which the pioneers of reform have passed which has made possible the reluctant toleration with which partial reforms are now regarded in some orthodox circles. However, the other story is this: A very kind-hearted Bengali lady was once taking a long boat journey in the company of her husband. At one stage of the journey it happened to rain rather heavily; and as the travellers could not halt, and as the boat had to be towed against a strong current, the poor boatmen were obliged to do the towing in the midst of that heavy downpour. The lady saw their miserable plight and was touched. She at once spoke to her husband and proposed a remedy. She said, "My dear, why let the boatmen suffer so much? Why not tell them to take their seats *in* the boat and tow it?" What could the poor husband do but smile at his wife's extreme simplicity and explain to her that those who would drag the boat against a

strong current must be *outside* and *ahead* of the boat. Alas! how many people are there in modern India who would pose as reformers and yet do not know this simple truth!

Now, I think, I have said enough on Idolatry, one of the foundations of orthodox Hindu society, to beg leave of you now to speak more directly than I have yet done of its other foundation, Caste, against which, as well as against Idolatry, the Bráhma Samáj has declared war. I know I shall be told that the Bráhma Samáj has not yet been able to break through caste altogether, that caste feeling yet lingers in some Bráhmas, who, in marrying their children, sedulously search for matches of their own castes for them and thus keep up in a manner the distinction of castes. I do not deny this and regret it with all my heart. But I must beg our detractors to mark the very broad difference in having caste-distinctions in the very foundations of a society and having it, not in the foundations, but only in creeks and corners of the structure. There is no caste in the foundations of the Bráhma Samáj. There is free interdining in it among people of the most varying castes. The ministry, the priesthood and other high offices of the church are open to all, and are, in some cases, filled not only by high caste non-Bráhmanas, but also by worthy people belonging to what are called the lower castes. If these 'lower castes' are scantily represented in the Samáj, this is due more to their unprogressive nature than to the disinclination of the 'higher castes' to mix

with them. Inter-caste marriages have taken place by hundreds and are joined in and encouraged even by those who are not bold enough to have such marriages in their own families. This lingering caste feeling, therefore, is no cause for serious apprehension. It is passing away, and will pass away entirely in the course of three or four generations more. Those who entertain this feeling may be said to be themselves ashamed of it, for they do not offer any public defence of it. The disregarding of caste may therefore be safely regarded as a fundamental principle of the Bráhma Samâj. As such, I shall reply to some attacks recently made upon it from people outside the Samáj.

It will be observed even by superficial thinkers that caste notions have recently received a very rude shock from what has been a real discovery to thousands of Hindus, namely, that caste distinctions did not exist in Hindu society in the earliest times, and that the form in which they exist at present is comparatively of very late origin. Antiquarians have now placed it beyond doubt that there was no caste in the early Vedic period of our history, and that even long after the castes were distinguished, inter-marriages were allowed between the four original castes. One has only to go through a few pages of the *Mahábhárat* to see the extent to which the free mixing of the castes was allowed in the days of which the great epic gives us an account. In fact, in those days caste was nothing but a division of classes according to

professions, and even professions were interchanged. Exclusion as regards eating was unknown. This last principle of division was introduced last and is happily the first to be disappearing. It is now known that the system, as it now prevails in the country, came into vogue with the revival of Hinduism after the decay of Buddhism. Even now, the system is not uniform in all parts of India. It is most lax in Sindh and the Panjáb where the first three castes, the Bráhmana, Kshtriya and Vaisya, freely interdine. It is more rigid in North-western India and Bengal, where, however, the exchange of certain cooked eatables is allowable among the higher and middle castes. It is most rigid in Southern India, where there is no social intercourse, properly so called, among the various castes, and where some castes are even unapproachable by the others. It is now felt that it is very difficult, if not quite impossible, to defend such a heterogenous system as this. It is difficult even to define it. Another great factor in loosening caste notions has been the growing feeling of nationality in the country. It is now very widely felt that the distinction of castes and the consequent absence of close social intercourse among the different classes of people in the country are effectively checking the growth of our national unity and perpetuating our social degradation and political subjection to an alien race. The preaching of human brotherhood by Christianity and Bráhmaism has not had any very tangible effect beyond their respective pales in

diminishing the hatred and,—where real hatred does not exist, as in the case of the castes equal in social rank,—the feeling of alienness which separate the castes from one another. But this newly growing feeling of our being members of a single nation having a common destiny to fulfil and common enemies to fight against, seems to have succeeded in some degree, where religious teaching has failed, in inspiring a genuine desire for removing differences and bringing about unity. This effect has become more clear than ever during the last few years and is a reflex action of the re-actionary policy followed by the British Indian Government. It has not indeed pulled down any actual barriers of caste, but that it has contributed largely to the growth of amity and co-operation among classes which have hitherto kept themselves far apart from one another, is unmistakably clear. If the feeling of national unity goes on deepening and broadening and brings together people of various castes to help one another in the work of national amelioration, the entire abolition of the caste system is only a question of time. Where pride, hatred and jealousy keep people from one another, it is not difficult to invent arguments to prove that their division and alienation are reasonable. Where these feelings are absent or are passing away, and there is a desire for unity and co-operation, it is easy to show that the distinction of castes is not made by God, but is the result of human ignorance. In fact, this desire for unity and co-operation among different castes and classes

could not have arisen without a certain loosening of caste notions. It would have been impossible in those old days when *játi* meant caste and not nation, when difference alone was seen and unity was quite or all but unseen. And it is also true that our national life will not rise above the initial stage in which it is now, and attain to the realization of equality, fraternity and liberty, unless caste notions are entirely washed away from our minds. Equality has no meaning where the non-Bráhmana is believed to be eternally inferior to the Bráhmana, and the 'once-born' to the 'twice-born.' Fraternity is impossible between you and me if you consider me untouchable and unapproachable. Liberty is nothing better than a hypocritical cant in the mouths of those who believe with Manu that the Śúdra has no property, no rights, and is the bondsman of the 'twice-born' by divine ordination. Thus political movements under these shibboleths are unmeaning and inconsequent, little better than school-boy demonstrations, unless they lead to social reforms.

Now, a class of apologists for caste has recently arisen who, while they regret the present innumerable divisions of the Hindu race, think nevertheless that the four original castes are founded on a natural division of aptitudes and occupations and exist in all civilised countries, though outside India they are not recognised as castes. In every civilised society there must be, it is said, a class of teachers, priests and advisers who should lead other people by their superior wisdom. They are the Bráhmanas, whether called so

or not. Below them are to be found people naturally endowed with the tact and ability required to administer the public affairs of the community, and defend their country against its enemies. They are the Kshatriyas. Then comes the class of merchants, artists, mechanics and planters who, organizing vast economic schemes, increase the wealth of their country. These are the Vaisyas. The lowest class consists of those who, without any power of initiation, can only carry out the wishes of those more richly endowed than they. These are the Śúdras. Now, I have no serious objection to urge against this division of classes according to aptitudes and occupations, though I think it is not strictly logical. Let me take for granted that men are born with different aptitudes and that they are meant by God for different occupations. Let me also grant that men of the same aptitudes and occupations do naturally form a class. But what I do not understand is why the classes so formed should fossilise themselves into mutually exclusive castes. Everywhere, both here and elsewhere, aptitudes change by progress and development even in individuals. One who is a mere labourer, a Śúdra, in his youth, grows into a skilful mechanic or a tactful merchant in his manhood. A merchant used to managing large and intricate mercantile affairs, developes into a politician. Sri Krishna, as pictured in the *Mahábhárat*, combined in himself the highest qualities of both a Kshatriya and a Bráhmana. There does not seem to be any reason, there-

fore, why the classes should be exclusive in regard to one another and should not interdine, intermarry or interchange professions. Then, as to heredity, children do indeed in many cases inherit the aptitudes of their parents ; but the exceptions are so many and so patent, that none but those who have a foregone conclusion to defend would say that the son of a Bráhmana must necessarily be a Bráhmana, and the son of a Śúdra necessarily a Śúdra. Even in caste-ridden India, religious teachers like Kavíra and the *pariah* saints of Southern India have arisen from the lowest castes. Some of the highest teachings of the *Upanishads* proceeded from Kshatriya teachers. The great Buddha and the founders of Jainism were Kshatriyas, and so were Nánaka, the founder of Sikhism, and some of the other Sikh *gurus*. Some of the ablest preachers of Vaishnavism in Bengal have been Vaidyas and Káyasthas ; and our third great leader Kesavchandra Sen, one whose influence over the country has been the widest, was a Vaidya by caste. Swámi Vivekánanda, who so successfully preached Vedántism, was a Káyastha and so are some of those who are ably carrying on his work. The great founder of Christianity was only a carpenter's son ; and in free Christendom, in Europe and America, the ablest preachers, the profoundest thinkers, the acutest politicians and the most successful merchants are continually rising from the lowest ranks. In the face of all this, who will say that there is any naturalness, any Divine

sanction, in even the primitive fourfold division of castes? Men of the same aptitudes and occupations will no doubt mix more closely with one another than with men of different aptitudes and occupations. But there will always be, as there have always been, transfers from one class to another, promotions and degradations, if you choose to call them so, which will show unmistakably the ignorance and short-sightedness of those who would keep the ever-growing soul of man in artificially-made fetters. The vice of our present system of castes is the impossibility of any actual transfer from one caste to another, whereas the distinction of classes which is to be found in other civilised countries is free from this ruinous principle of exclusion. There can be no actual comparison therefore between the two, and the existence of the latter cannot be urged as a justification of the existence of the former. Besides, who is to decide which of the numerous existing castes belong to which of the original four castes; and if a re-distribution according to *guna* and *karma* be thought desirable, who is to carry out this re-distribution? Happily the country is now under rulers who, notwithstanding their strong race feeling and the numerous defects in their system of administration due to this race feeling, recognize no distinction of castes in the proper sense of the term. Under their impartial treatment of all castes, more than by any other influences, the caste system is slowly but surely breaking down. Even enlight-

ened Hindu rulers are ignoring their caste notions, if they have any, in the distribution of their patronage and in the administration of justice. There is in fact no power in the land to help in the re-distribution of the castes and their reduction to the primitive four. The old Kshatriya power, which was supreme in all social matters in times gone-by, is irrecoverably destroyed ; and those who have succeeded to it have, for good or for evil, a very different idea of what society should be. Their idea may not be quite correct, and we need not and should not follow them blindly in reconstructing our society. But there can be no doubt that, whatever form our society may take as the result of that process of reconstruction which it is slowly undergoing, this reconstruction will follow that line of impartial recognition of virtue and ability, irrespective of the accidents of birth, which at once agrees with the declared policy of our rulers and the verdict of the collective reason of the human race. A re-construction of society on narrower lines, and social reforms of a halting and partial nature, such as the numerous caste-conferences in the country are trying to effect, are not only inconsistent with truth and right, but are also without that important factor in social reform, the sanction of the state. The so-called leaders of society may pass resolutions and call upon their castemen to respect them. But what is there to prevent the latter's spurning such resolutions and asserting their independence ? The days

are gone by when Hindu kings and, after them, such social potentates as the Rájá of Krishnanagar, carried into effect the social legislation of the Bráhmanas and made the life of a non-conformist and would-be reformer miserable by social persecution. People may now break all your artificial rules of caste and custom and yet not only be safe under the protection of the state, but rise in rank and power under its patronage. In spite of the declared religious neutrality of the British Government, it is distinctly opposed to the artificial caste-restrictions of orthodox Hindu society and in favour of the thorough-going reform scheme of the Bráhma Samáj. It is rather strange that the full significance of this fact escapes the attention of the so-called leaders of Hindu society.

I shall notice one more argument of the modern defenders of caste before I close. Against the Bráhma practice of inter-caste marriages, it is urged that, though there is no natural division of castes, the different castes of India have so long been separated from one another and represent so many different grades of intellectual and moral progress, that at least in the present state of Indian society the commingling of the different castes will lead inevitably to a deterioration of the higher castes. It is claimed for these castes, specially for the Bráhmanas, that they are much ahead of the lower castes and that the latter must take yet a very long time to come up to them, even admitting that they are advancing under the modern

system of universal education. Now, without denying that one class of people may have a distinct advantage over another, if the former has diligently tried to improve itself and the latter has not, it may still be shown that the above argument is much overstrained. In the first place, the Indian castes are not such real unities as this argument implies. Individuals and families in a single caste differ so much in respect of intellectual and moral character, that, taken as a whole, it is difficult to say whether a particular caste is 'high' or 'low'. Secondly, castes excelling in certain qualities over others present certain bad qualities on the other hand in such abundance, that, if the extremes, namely, the highest and the lowest, are left out of consideration, it would be impossible to say which caste is decidedly better than which other caste. There are highly intelligent and morally advanced individuals and families in all castes except, perhaps, the semi-Hinduised lowest castes. As I said in a lecture I delivered in this hall sometime ago,—one which has appeared in substance as the introduction to my *Social Reform in Bengal: A side-sketch*: "It may very well be asked whether the Bráhmanas are, if all things be taken together, really superior to the other castes. How many Bráhmanas can claim to be the descendants of a long line of learned ancestors? Have not whole families (and even sections) been but simple, unlearned priests from time immemorial? As to virtue, if the Bráhmanas have shown certain exceptional virtues, are not certain vices, on the other hand,

such as egotism, arrogance, mendicancy and want of self-respect, found among them in a super-abundant degree? In the same manner, are not the Kshatriyas peculiarly liable to being irritable, overbearing and oppressive? The so-called higher classes are then not altogether higher than those whom they consider as their inferiors. On the other hand, there is a good deal of spiritual culture among some of the so-called lower castes,—such culture as makes them superior to many belonging to the 'higher'. In fact, modesty, piety and benevolence seem to be more common among the classes spoken of as 'lower' than in those who boast of their high birth. In regard to purely intellectual culture also, are not cases of keen intelligence and great mental powers, among the classes from which they were least expected, growing more and more numerous and showing that the doctrine of heredity, as commonly accepted, is much overstrained? The fact is, heredity and individuality must both be taken into account. An individual is not a mere reproduction of his parents (or remoter ancestors). If he were so, there would be nothing in him more than there was in them. But as Darwin says, and as we might see even without the help of Darwin, every individual shows a 'variation' inexplicable by his pedigree. And sometimes the variation is most surprising, and shows how limited is the truth in the doctrine of heredity. Immanuel Kant was the son of a poor and simple saddle-maker; and yet he constructed a system of philosophy which is the wonder of the world. Every

individual, we should remember, is a fresh incarnation of God, a fresh manifestation of the Divine essence, and there is no knowing how much of that essence will be manifested in each." There does not seem to be any reason, therefore, why the higher castes should not intermarry with advanced individuals and families of the so-called lower castes but rather wait for generations and perhaps ages for the near approach of the castes to which they respectively belong. If the decided superiority of one caste to another were a fact, and a real argument against inter-caste marriages, no length of time would indeed suffice to bring the castes in line with one another, for as the lower would advance, so would the higher, and thus the latter would always leave the former behind in the race of intellectual and moral progress. Happily the alleged fact is no fact at all. There are individuals and families in the so-called lower castes which can compare favourably with the best to be found in the so called higher. Inter-marriages among such people are not likely to do any harm to the parties. Whatever may have been our differences in the past, a common system of education is now happily levelling up these differences and raising us to a moral platform from which love, sympathy, co-operation and unity appear to be things higher and more valuable than all other things. If, therefore, the so-called higher castes of our people were even to lose certain of their long acquired excellences in contracting marital unions with the so-called lower castes, the gains of such unions would be

incomparably greater than the losses. In the place of a nation torn by internal feuds, though containing sections advanced in a lower and outward sense, such a unions would lay the foundation of a united nation strong in the genuine strength of love and brotherly sympathy. We already realise the blessings of such unions in miniature in our Bráhma religious gatherings, in which a common living religion, the highest of all unifying factors, obliterates all distinctions and makes us embrace men of all castes and grades of society as brethren. When will such blessed unity pervade all classes and ranks of Indian society? When will those pernicious distinctions which are sapping the very life-blood of our nation be at an end, and India will rise as a strong united nation fit to fulfil the high destiny which Providence has ordained for her? There cannot be a surer truth than this, my friends, that that high destiny cannot be fulfilled without the utter destruction of the supreme root of all our social evils—the caste system.

LECTURE XII

Marriage and the Rights of Women

In my last lecture, that on "The Bráhma Samáj and Social Reform," I dealt with only the two fundamental principles on which the Bráhma Samáj, as a reconstructed society, is based, namely the spiritual worship of God, which excludes idolatry and sacrificial worship of all sorts, and the abolition of caste as a social institution. I have now to trace the development of the reform movement which commenced with the introduction of these initial reforms. As I have already said, the Ádi Bráhma Samáj has broken through caste only imperfectly, and there are individuals in the other two principal sections of the Bráhma Samáj who still retain a good deal of caste feeling. In the same way, there have been, in all stages of social progress in the Samáj, persons and even classes of persons who have not taken to the reforms advocated and adopted by the more advanced members of the Samáj. But this by no means proves that the advanced ideas taught and practised by these progressive minds do not form a part of Bráhmaism as a creed and a scheme of life. In no society can uniform progress be seen all along the line. Everywhere there are men

who are very little ahead of the starting point as well as those who go so far as to be hardly seen by the laggers behind, the space between being occupied by men in all stages of progress. In ascertaining the true nature of a movement, both these extreme points as well as the intermediate forms have to be recognised and seen in their mutual relations and in the proper order of their development. In dealing with Bráhmaism in its social aspect, we must take into cognizance both that rudimentary form which is contented with the mere rejection of idolatry and sacrificial worship while conforming to all established usages, rational or irrational, and that advanced type of Bráhmaism which consists in a thorough reconstruction of domestic and social life on the most liberal principles, as well as all the intermediate varieties of thought and practice.

Now, the first marriages that took place according to Bráhma rites differed very little from orthodox marriages. The rites were indeed divested of their idolatrous character; but otherwise they remained unchanged. The brides, when they were spinsters, were all under age, their ages varying generally from 9 to 15, and they were "given away," according to the orthodox fashion, by the guardians to the bridegroom, the old idea remaining unchanged that women are under the absolute disposal of men. The progressive party in the Ádi Bráhma Samáj seems to have early felt the absurdity of the notion; for we find that in the very first marriage that was celebrated by them

after the separation, *sampradán* or giving away was changed into *bhárárpan* or making over charge. Instead of saying that he gave away his daughter to the bridegroom, the bride's father said he made over the charge of his daughter to the bridegroom, the idea still prevailing that the bride was a minor and unable to take care of herself. Two other features introduced into this marriage were still more important, and they have since characterised all marriages that have taken place in the progressive sections of the Bráhma Samáj. They are *sammati-grahan*, the asking of both the bride and the bridegroom's consent to the marriage, and *udbáha-pratijná* or the marriage vow taken by both parties. The old and still current idea in what Manu calls 'Bráhma' and 'Prájápatya' marriage, namely, that marriage is an arrangement between the bride's guardian and the bridegroom or rather his guardian, was thus entirely discarded, and its place was taken by the more or less western idea that marriage is a contract between the parties themselves in which the consent and help of the guardians might indeed be required, but the validity of which depends upon the free will and consent of the contracting parties. Thus Bráhma marriages came to be distinguished from orthodox Hindu marriages not only in respect of the religious ceremonies associated with them, but even in their underlying spirit and essence. That the question of the proper age of the parties should soon be raised, was but natural. As long as marriage is looked upon as an arrangement between

the guardians of the parties, an arrangement into which the will and consent of the parties themselves do not enter as a factor, it matters nothing what the age of the parties may be. But when it ceases to be such an arrangement and comes to be looked upon as a free and willing contract between the parties themselves, the question cannot but arise whether the parties are physically and morally fit to enter into the contract. The question of physical fitness was indeed the one which could be appreciated by most, and so naturally it absorbed the attention of Bráhmas and non-Bráhmas interested in the question. Kesav adopted a very practical method of deciding the question. He addressed a circular letter to the leading medical men of the country in those days, both the Indian and the European representatives of the medical profession, asking them to state the minimum age, according to them, at which girls should be married in this country. The replies of these eminent physicians to Kesav's letter, all of which were published in the annual report of the Indian Reform Association for 1870-71, are a very instructive document and would bear repeated reprints, as the question of the marriageable age of Indian girls is still raised and discussed in public meetings and periodicals at intervals of some four or five years. The reply of Dr. Mahendralál Sarkár specially was a most elaborate one, discussing the question from various standpoints and showing clearly the ruinous effects of premature marriage on the bodies of both the mother and

the child. It also pointed out a mistake which is very common, even among otherwise well-informed persons, namely that the beginning of adolescence is the minimum age for the marriage of girls. He showed how this beginning is hastened in this country by pernicious marriage customs, and also that the menses take considerable time to become regular and normal, before which marriage should never take place. However, I give here, in a table, a summary of the opinions of the medical men consulted by Kesav on the minimum marriageable age for Indian girls. Some of them have also stated, as they were asked to do, the proper age of marriage for our girls.

		Minimum age.	Proper age.
Dr. Chandra Kumar De	...	14	...
Dr. Charles	...	14	...
Babu Nabin Krishna Bose	...	15	18
Dr. A. V. White	...	15 or 16	18
Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar	...	16	...
Tamiz Khan Bahadur	...	16	...
Dr. Norman Chevers	...	16	18
Dr. D. B. Smith	...	16	18 or 19
Dr. Ewart	...	16	18 or 19
Dr. Fayrer	...	16	18 or 20
Dr. S. G. Chakrabarti	...	16	21
Dr. Atmaram Pandurang	...	20	...

"The practical result of this investigation was thus epitomised'" says Miss S. D. Collet in her *Bráhma Year Book* for 1879, "in a speech of Mr. Sen's at the

Calcutta Town Hall on September 30th, 1871 : " 'The medical authorities, in Calcutta,' said he, 'unanimously declare that sixteen is the minimum marriageable age of girls in this country. Dr. Charles makes a valuable suggestion ; he holds that fourteen, being the commencement of adolescence, may for the present be regarded as the minimum age at which native girls may be allowed to marry, and may serve as a starting-point for reform in this direction. In conformity with his suggestion and the opinions given by the other referees, we have come to the conclusion that, for the present at least, it would be expedient to follow the provision in the Bill (he means the Bráhma Marriage Bill which was then before the Legislature), which makes fourteen the minimum marriageable age of girls in this country, leaving it in the hands of time to develop this reform slowly and gradually into maturity and fulness. " Another question concerning Bráhma marriages was raised almost simultaneously with this, namely, whether they, since they had departed so far from the orthodox form, specially since they broke through the restriction of caste, could at all be regarded as Hindu marriages, and if not, were they valid in the eye of law ? Indeed, this question was far advanced when the investigation as to the proper age of marriage, to which I have referred, took place, and the two became practically one in the controversy which now began to agitate Bráhma society, and to a great extent native society in general,—the controversy as to the desirability of a new Marriage Act. As to

the legal validity of Bráhma marriages, the question was practically settled for the progressive Bráhmas by the opinion of Mr. J. H. Cowie, the then Advocate-General of India. On a reference being made to him on the subject, "Mr. Cowie replied in effect that the Bráhma marriages, not having been celebrated with Hindu or Muhammadan rites of orthodox regularity and not conforming to the procedure prescribed by any law or to the usages of any recognised religion, were invalid, and the offspring of them were illegitimate." As to the Hindu or un-Hindu character of Bráhma marriages, in both the Ádi Bráhma Samáj form and the form adopted by the progressive Bráhmas, the point was settled very satisfactorily by the most eminent pandits of Calcutta, Nadia and Benares, whose opinions on the subject were sought by the progressive Bráhmas in the first two cases and by the Ádi Bráhma Samáj people in the last, and who declared unanimously that marriages solemnized according to neither of the Bráhma forms was valid nor, in their opinion, according to the Hindu shastras. The need for an enactment to legalise Bráhma marriages being thus proved beyond any reasonable doubt, Kesav and his followers applied to Government for the desired relief and were most strenuous in their efforts to obtain it during the four years that elapsed between their first attempts and their final success in 1872. The Bill took, during its period of incubation, three distinct forms, the history of which needs to be remembered in order that justice may be done to those who

got it passed and that efforts to have it amended in future may not be misdirected. It first took the form of a Civil Marriage Act applicable to all non Christians who objected to be married according to the forms of the established native religions. The declaration to be made by the marrying parties was,—"I do not profess the Christian religion, and I object to be married in accordance with the rites of the Hindu, Muhammadan, Buddhist, Parsi or Jewish religion." In this form the Bill met with a fierce opposition from the orthodox Hindu community and had thus to be given up. It was feared by them that it might induce many professed Hindus to contract marriages in disregard of caste rules and yet retain their position in the orthodox community and share in the advantages. That this fear was too true, has no doubt been proved amply by the growing heterodoxy of many members of that community. If the Bill had been passed in the form referred to, the disruption of orthodox Hindu society would have been far more rapid than it has actually been. The second form taken by the bill was that of a Bráhma Marriage Act applicable only to Bráhmas. In this form it met with no opposition from the orthodox community, but it was opposed tooth and nail by the Ádi Bráhma Samáj people, who feared that, as Bráhmas, they would have to come under the operation of the Act, and even if this should not take place, the passing of the Bill would widen the gap between the Bráhmas and the

orthodox Hindu community and also minimise the chance of the Ádi Bráhma Samáj form of marriage being ultimately recognized as a Hindu form. This opposition necessarily led to the abandonment of the Bill in its second form and to the adoption of the third and final form in which it was passed. In its applicability to all who objected to being married according to the recognized forms, the Bill went back to its first form; but the declaration as to objection to orthodox forms of marriage had to be changed to one of an actual renunciation or non-profession of orthodox systems of religion. That this form was made necessary by the opposition of the orthodox Hindu community to the first form of the Bill and that of the Ádi Bráhma Samáj to its second form, will be clear to those who have followed me so far. It will be made more clear, if possible, by the following extract from the speech of the Honourable Mr. Fitzjames Stephen, the then legal member of the Viceroy's Council, on the occasion of the introduction of the Bill in its final form. "There is, I think," said Mr. Stephen, "a distinction in this matter which the Bill, as introduced, overlooks. It is the distinction between treating Hindu law as a law binding only on those who submit to it of their own will, and treating it as a law binding on those who do submit to it only so far as they choose to do so. It is surely one thing to say to Hindus, 'You are at liberty to change your law and religion if you think proper, and you shall suffer no loss by doing so'; and quite another thing to say to them—'You are

at liberty to play fast and loose with your law and religion; you shall, if you please, be, at one and the same time, a Hindu and not a Hindu.' By recognizing the existence of the Hindu religion as a personal law in this matter of marriage, I think that we have contracted an obligation to enforce its provisions in their entirety upon those who choose to live under them, just as we have, by establishing the general principle of religious freedom, contracted a further obligation to protect anyone who chooses to leave the Hindu religion against injury for having done so, and to provide him with institutions recognized by law and suitable to his peculiar position. I think that it is hardly possible for us to hold other language on the subject than this—'Be a Hindu or not as you please; but be one thing or the other, and do not ask us to undertake the impossible task of constructing some compromise between Hinduism and not-Hinduism which will enable you to evade the necessity of knowing your own minds. The present Bill is framed upon these principles." After recounting the history of the Bráhma Marriage Bill previously introduced by him and given up on account of the opposition of the Ádi Bráhma Samáj, Mr. Stephen continued: "The question, accordingly, had to be reconsidered; and after some intermediate steps, and a very careful consideration of the matter in council, I asked the representatives of the two bodies of Bráhmas whether the one would be satisfied with, and whether the

other would object to, a Bill confined to persons who had renounced or had been excluded from, or did not profess, the Hindu, Muhammadan, Buddhist, Parsee, Sikh or Jaina religion? I made the offer, expecting that it would be accepted by the Ádi Bráhmas, whom it would not obviously affect, and that it would be rejected by the progressive Bráhmas. I supposed that they occupied one of those intermediate religious positions which are so common in the present day, in which people dislike to say either that they are or are not members of a particular creed......But they took a bolder line. Before the views of Government had been communicated to them at all, they sent in a paper, by way of reply to the Ádi Bráhma Samáj, containing this remarkable sentence......'The term "Hindu" does not include the Bráhmas, who deny the authority of the Vedas, are opposed to every form of the Bráhmanical religion, and being eclectics, admit proselytes from Hindus, Muhammadans, Christians and other religious sects.' Nothing could be plainer or more straightforward than this; and I wish to add that the subsequent conduct of the sect has corresponded to this distinct avowal of their views. They have unreservedly accepted the offer made to them by me on behalf of the Government, and the Ádi Samáj have, with equal frankness, admitted that the measure is one to which they have no right and no wish to object. As for the views of the general body of the Native community, they appear, I think, sufficiently

from the replies which were received to Sir Henry Maine's Bill (*i.e.*, the Bill in its first form). The great majority of the Native community would regard with indifference a measure applying to persons who stand outside the pale of the native religions." Now, Mr. Stephen's remark as to the indifference of the great majority of the Native community to the measure was sufficiently verified during the six weeks for which the passing of the Bill remained in abeyance after the delivery of the speech from which I have quoted. Among other replies to the request of the Government to pass an opinion on the Bill, the Sanátan Dharma Rakshiní Sabhá of Calcutta said that in its opinion the amended Marriage Bill was not likely to affect the Hindus and their religion, and that therefore it had no objection to the passing of the Bill.

Now, an amendment of the Act has been felt to be very desirable by some Bráhmas and some non-Bráhmas too, who would avail themselves of its healthy provisions if it were divested of its objectionable features. The most important exception taken to the Act is that it requires the parties marrying under it to virtually renounce the Hindu name. The intense feeling of nationality which has been growing in the country during the last thirty years or so makes this renunciation repugnant even to many of those who care little for orthodox Hinduism. A considerable and perhaps a growing number of Bráhmas share in this repugnance. An increasing

familiarity with the teachings of the higher Hindu scriptures on the part of our educated men perhaps deepens their attachment to the Hindu name. On the other hand, several circumstances have contributed greatly to a broadening of the Hindu name in the minds both of Hindus and non-Hindus. The Bráhmas, even those who have practically renounced the Hindu name by marrying according to the Act, are now often spoken of even by the members of the orthodox community as an integral portion of the Hindu community. Even the Government, which, in 1872, in a manner compelled the progressive Bráhmas to renounce the Hindu name as the condition of protecting their legal rights, would not allow them, in the last census, to return themselves as a body distinct from the Hindus, but forcibly, as it were, classed them as a branch of the Hindu community. Besides, a number of recent cases in the High Court and in the Privy Council have made it clear that the Bráhmas, inspite of their heterodoxy, are Hindus and under Hindu law. It would seem, therefore, that if the Government were now asked to extend the scope of Act III of 1872, to make it go back to its first form and become available for all who, whatever religions they may profess, object to marry according to the established forms, the storm of opposition which was raised against it in 1868 would not be raised now, and that whatever opposition might be raised by the strictly orthodox, it would have less weight with the Government now than it had at the time

referred to. But to have the Act amended in this direction, a large body of men calling themselves Hindus and belonging mostly to the orthodox community, must come forward and ask for the protection of a new and liberal enactment. If I were to speak of my own feelings, I would say that thinking, as I do, that Bráhmaism, in its essence, is the same movement that was started by the *Rishis* of the *Upanishads*, I indeed dislike anything that may seem to indicate a severance of spiritual ties with them,—an ignoring of historical continuity between the past and the present. But I must say that the name 'Hindu' is not a particularly happy one, and as it denotes both the grossest idolator and the spiritual worshipper of the Infinite Being, it fails utterly to describe the religion of the Bráhma Samáj. Though, therefore, I do not like that the law should extort from me the unwilling declaration "I do not profess the Hindu religion," I know that by renouncing Hinduism in this manner I renounce only the popular Hinduism of idolatry, caste and priestcraft, and not the exalted Theism of the ancient *Rishis* and their modern followers, to which my relations remain quite unaffected by this declaration.*

* Since the above was written and spoken no fewer than three attempts have been made, by liberal-minded gentlemen belonging to the orthodox fold, to have Act III of 1872 amended on the line indicated. The last attempt has met with partial success. The Law is now available for Hindus, Buddhists, Jainas and Sikhs wishing to marry under its provisions. The amended Law is appended in full to my *Manual of Brahma Ritual and Devotions*.

I shall now summarise the advantages which Bráhma marriages registered under the provisions of Act III of 1872 offer to members of the Native community, specially those of Hindu nationality, and the changes they have inaugurated in that community. I need hardly say that the provisions of the Act were, for the most part, suggested by the Bráhmas themselves.

1. Secret marriages are prevented by them as much as they can be prevented by law. A fortnight before the marriage, one of the parties, after a fortnight's previous stay in the place where it is to be celebrated, has to send a notice to the Marriage Registrar, with full details as to both the parties, and that notice has to be put up in the Registra's Office for a fortnight, exposed to the public view.

2. The marriage of children is made impossible by this Act. While even the most enlightened in the orthodox community often act against their liberal views in this respect, while girls of 10 or 11 are sometimes married even in such a socially advanced family as that of the Maharshi, it is impossible even for the least advanced among those who have adopted this reformed system of marriage to give away in marriage a girl under 14 and a boy under 18. And the fact is, as was anticipated by the proposers of the Bill, that the age of marriage has gradually been raised much over that provided for in the law, so that one scarcely hears now of a girl of 14 and a boy of 18 being married under the

Act. That reforms like this cannot be left to the progress of mere public opinion, but needed the helping hand, the coercive force, of law, is evident from this, if it were not already evident from the history of social reform in European countries.

3. That the consent of the parties is essential to marriage, is clearly recognised in this form of marriage, and the recognition of this principle sharply distinguishes reformed marriages under the Act from orthodox Hindu marriages. The principle is recognised both by Bráhma public opinion and by the Act. Whatever religious rites may or may not be observed in connection with the marriages, the Law requires that the parties should express their consent to the marriage and declare that they take each other as legal husband and wife, and that this expression of consent and this declaration of entering into the marriage contract should be heard by the Marriage Registrar. It is indeed true that in many Bráhma marriages the recognition of this principle is only, or little better than, nominal. Where the parties are not of mature age, where they are not given the opportunity of freely mixing with each other and knowing each other closely, consent cannot but be more or less nominal. But even the nominal recognition of this principle is important and marks a great advance from the old idea of marriage in which consent has no place. As the progress of education and that of liberal ideas bring the sexes into closer social intercourse with each other, consent and mutual

choice become more and more real. Within my own experience there have been several cases of genuine attachment and free choice proceeding from long and close acquaintance with each other and some cases where the selection of a bridegroom by the bride's guardians has been set aside by the bride. As the female sex comes to understand more and more clearly the truth and nature of its God-given freedom and the responsibility and solemnity of the marriage vow, and men themselves come to understand that women are not mere means of pleasure or mere domestic drudges, but companions and helpers in the solemn journey of life, the former will cease more and more, in entering into the marriage relation, to be guided by the opinions of parents and guardians, specially when they are dictated by mere worldly considerations, and seek more and more the light of God within, and the latter will be contented less and less with the nominal consent of women to the marriages proposed for them and wish more and more to see them come up to the level of free and responsible humanity.

4. This form of marriage abolishes caste distinctions altogether. Notwithstanding the loosening of caste notions among the educated in the orthodox community, inter-caste marriages are practically impossible in that community, and even the Ádi Bráhma Samáj, notwithstanding its avowed heterodoxy, scarcely ventures to break through caste rules in marriage, lest, it would seem, the marriages celebrated by it should

be pronounced un-Hindu. Marriage reform, then, in any but the most elementary form, has hitherto been impossible for people of Hindu nationality outside the Bráhma Samáj and the Native Christian Church. The Árya Samáj has, indeed, celebrated a small number of inter-caste marriages. But their number is so small, and they have met with so much opposition, both direct and indirect, from the conservative section of the Samaj, which forms the great bulk of the movement, that they can scarcely be counted as a factor in the great work of social reform.

Fifthly, this form of marriage has abolished polygamy once for all in the society growing under its protection, and thus dealt a death-blow to one of the most crying evils of Indian society. Under no condition whatever, whether it be change of faith, the absence of issue or the invalidism of one of the parties, is polygamy or polyandry possible, according to its provisions.

Sixthly and lastly, the reformed system of marriage has initiated an important social reform by recognising the need and affording the possiblity of divorce in extreme cases. Nothing indeed is more harmful to social peace and well-being than that divorce should be easy. But few will deny that in extreme cases of conjugal infidelity, specially if it be of a deliberate and persisting nature, the marriage tie must be regarded as dissolved, and both law and society should provide for the dissolution of marriage in such cases.

I have now done speaking of Bráhma marriages and have next to speak of what the Bráhma Samáj has done for the education of women and for delivering them from the social bondage in which they usually live in this country. On the first point, I shall content myself with reproducing, with slight additions and alterations, what I have said on the subject in my essay on "Female Education," in my pamphlet entitled *Social Reform in Bengal: a side sketch.* In that paper I have spoken of the various efforts made in the country, since the advent of the British, to promote the education of women. On the present occasion I shall make only a few short extracts from it, bearing specially on the part the Bráhma Samáj has taken in that great work.

"In 1870 Babu Kesavchandra Sen visited England and by his public speeches and conversations with English men and English women of light and leading greatly interested them in the cause of social progress in India. While at Bristol, Mr. Sen joined in the ceremony of founding the National Indian Association, which has been helping female education work in India in a variety of ways ever since its foundation. After his return to the country, Babu Kesavchandra Sen established the Indian Reform Association and opened a Female Normal School under the auspices of its Female Improvement Section. This school continued for a number of years and did good work as a Girl and Female Adult School. But on the raising of the Bethune School to the status of

a High School, and subsequently of a College, it was practically closed. It was, however, succeeded by a Girls' School, called the Victoria School, of somewhat intermittent existence, and by an organisation of the same nature—I mean, of the same flickering vitality—called the "Victoria College for the High Education of Women," (and latterly, the Victoria Institute) which organises lectures, serial or occasional, on scientific and other subjects, by well-known professors or preachers.*

"In 1871 Babu Sasipada Banurji visited England with his wife, who was the first Hindu lady to visit that country. This visit promoted the cause of female education both directly and indirectly. Mrs. Banurji's bold conduct must have had a far-reaching result in effectively breaking open the iron-doors of the Zenana and encouraging her country-women fearlessly to go on in their pilgrimage of progress. As a fact, she was gradually followed by several of them, who visited both Great Britain and the Continent, for either study or travel.

"In 1873 an educated English lady of a philanthropic bent of mind came to India and became the guest of Sir John and Lady Phear. Her name was Miss Annie Akroyd, but latterly she became Mrs. H. Beveridge. Mr. Sasipada Banurji had met her while in England and learnt her intention of visiting India to study and,

* The Victoria Institution has for scme years past been a High School affiliated to the Calcutta University.

if possible, help the female education work here. She now came to carry out her object, and her services were eagerly availed of by the small band of reformers who were disappointed by the failure of the scheme for improving the Bethune School (narrated in another portion of the pamphlet). A higher class school called the Hindu Mahila Vidyalaya was opened by them under her superintendence at Baliganj near Calcutta. The Committee included Sir John as President and Lady Phear as Secretary. This may be said to be the beginning of the movement for the high education of grown-up Hindu ladies. But, as had happened in the case of the Female Normal School scheme, the orthodox party kept away from the movement, and even Babu Kesavchandra held himself aloof from it. But the school continued its noble work for a number of years till the retirement of Sir J. and Lady Phear led to its being closed. The closing of this school left a gap which was soon filled up by the establishment of the Banga Mahila Vidyálaya in 1876 chiefly through the exertions of Messrs. Durgamohan Das and Anandamohan Bose. To the former and to his wife the country owes a debt of deep gratitude for services to the cause of female progress, and many an educated lady who now possesses a happy home thankfully acknowledges it as due to them.

"In 1876 the National Indian Association established a Bengal Branch with Mr. Sasipada Bánurji as its corresponding Secretary. In a paper read at one of the meetings of the Branch, Mr. Bánurji made

a few suggestions of work on new lines. Three of these suggestions were carried out. One of these was the appointment of two Zenana teachers who went about visiting Zenana ladies and imparting knowledge to them on a non-sectarian basis. This scheme has now been taken up by the Government on a large scale, though its practical carrying out is not a little hampered by want of qualified teachers. The second suggestion was the publication of a number of suitable books for females under the title of the 'Mary Carpenter Series.' Handsome prizes were offered to the authors; and the result was the appearance of such meritorious books as Pandit Sivanáth Sástri's '*Mejo Bau*' and Bábu Dvárakanáth Gánguli's '*Suruchir Kutír*'. The third work taken up was the foundation of a committee of ladies and gentlemen who undertook the task of visiting Girls' Schools and Zenana students and encouraging them by prizes and stipends."

"The remarkable progress in female education during recent years—the imparting of a really liberal education to our women, their submission to public tests of their acquirements equally with persons of the other sex, and the consequent yearly multiplication of female graduates and undergradutes—dates from an event which took place in 1877. It was the amalgamation of the Banga Mahilá Vidyálaya mentioned above with the Bethune School. The latter was then, as it had been for many years, a mere primary school attended by little girls. It was visited

by Lady Lytton in 1877; and it was the dissatisfaction which Her Excellency expressed at it that, perhaps, more than any other thing, disclosed its unworthiness to enjoy, in its old form, the support it had been receiving for a long series of years from Government. Her Excellency's visit to two other Institutions—Babu Kesavchandra Sen's Female Normal School and the Banga Mahilá Vidyálaya,—and her hearty recognition of the good work done at the latter school, led to the proposal for its amalgamation with the Bethune. The amalgamation really consisted in the Government taking over the charge of the Banga Mahilá, their promise to support it—with its scheme for the high education of grown-up women and its boarding arrangements conceived according to reformed tastes, without any recognition of caste rules and necessarily somewhat anglicised in form,—and its transfer to the spacious buildings of the Bethune School. It was not so much an amalgamation as an addition—the addition of a number of higher classes and a boarding establishment to a primary school. Babu Kesavchandra Sen's party opposed the amalgamation tooth and nail, but could not prevent it. They opposed it on the ground of the alleged unsuitable character of the education which was imparted at the Banga Mahilá and which the reformed Bethune School now pledged itself to impart, and the so-called un-Hindu character of the boarding arrangements which obtained there and were now going to be perpetuated. These objections of course carried no weight

with the supporters of the amalgamation scheme. The fact is that there already existed at the time, and has since increased in extent and volume, a body of opinions on social matters much in advance of those held by Kesavchandra and his immediate followers; and it is the men holding those views, whether they called themselves Hindus, Bráhmas or Christians, who now began to guide the destinies of the Bethune School. The result has been that while men of really old and orthodox views still content themselves by giving their girls the sort of primary education imparted in the lower clases of the Bethune College, and while Bábu Kesavchandra's party still hold themselves aloof from the higher courses of the College, except in a very few cases, the high education imparted in the College is fully availed of by people of the other party, specially the Sádháran Bráhmas and the Native Christians.* The Boarding Institution of the College, which consists chiefly of the advanced students, is therefore, as it could not but be, heterodox and in that sense un-Hindu, as Babu Kesavchandra's party complained it was. However, the Government, as might be expected, made a few liberal concessions to the managers of the Banga Mahilá Vidyálaya in taking over its charge and connecting it with the

* During the last few years there has been a large influx of girls in the college and the higher school classes from the orthodox fold and the followers of Kesav have practically given up their old opposition to the higher education of girls.

Bethune. They were (1) that a daily devotional service according to the principles of the Bráhma Samáj should be allowed to be held in the school premises for the benefit of the Bráhma students, (2) that the Bráhma girls should be taken to a Bráhma place of worship every Sunday in the school omnibus, and (3) that there should be at least three Bráhma members in the school committee and that no teacher or professor should be appointed without the consent of these three members. As it was the Bráhmas who furnished the Bethune School with its higher classes, and as these classes are still mostly recruited from the Bráhma community, these concessions were nothing but just."

"In 1876, the first Indian girl appeared at the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University. It was Miss Chandramukhi Bose, a Christian lady, who afterwards became the Principal of the Bethune College. She passed the examination and became the immediate cause of the formation of the College classes in connection with the Bethune School and the opening of the doors of the Calcutta University to Indian ladies. The great impetus given to higher female education by this measure is too well-known to require particular mention. One of its indirect results was the gradual opening of several High Schools and even a few Colleges for girls by Christian missionary and other agencies. As I have already said, Bráhma ladies in large numbers availed themselves of the opportunity which was thus afforded to

them. They were led by Miss Kádambiní Bose, afterwards Dr. Mrs. Ganguli, who graduated in or about 1880 and was followed by numerous Bráhma lady graduates. Mrs. Ganguli was also the first to enter the Medical College and show a new field of usefulness to Bráhma and other Indian ladies. In 1883, the Bráhma Girls' Day and Boarding School was founded, chiefly through the exertions of Pandit Sivanáth Sástrí. It was soon raised to the status of a High School and has since, through official and non-official support, got three spacious buildings of its own. It was established with the object of combining religious with general education, which could not be done in schools managed by the Government. In 1887, Bábu Sasipada Bánurji opened the Barahanagar Hindu Widows' Home, the pioneer of all other similar institutions now established throughout the country. It was virtually a Bráhma Institution and educated a large number of young ladies and helped them in settling down in life as mistresses of Bráhma homes or reformed Hindu homes. It was closed in 1901, as ill-health and the infirmities of old age made it impossible for its devoted founder and manager to keep it up any longer."

I shall close this hurried sketch of the history of female education in the Bráhma Samáj with only a bare mention of the organs which the Bráhmas have from time to time started for the promotion of female education. The place of honour is due to the *Bámábodhiní*, started in 1864, whose founder and editor, the

venerable Bábu Umeschandra Datta, has just left us after a life of pious and devoted activity, the like of which is scarcely seen. The next to be named is the *Abalá Bándhab*, now defunct, which was started, about 1869, by the late Bábu Dvárakanáth Gángulí, whose devotion to the cause of female progress won him the name of his paper, which means, 'the Friend of Women.' A later addition to female journalism was the *Mahilá*, edited by Bábu Girischandra Sen of the New Dispensation Apostolic body. *Antahpur*, now defunct, was started by Bábu Sasipada Bánurji and conducted for a number of years exclusively by ladies headed by his daughter, the late Banalatá Deví. The *Bhárati*, started originally by Bábu Dvijendranáth Thákur, was long edited by his accomplished sister, Srímatí Svarnakumárí Deví, and is still edited by her daughters. Two more Bráhma journals for and edited by ladies were the *Bhárat Mahilá*, long edited by Srímatí Sarayubálá Datta and the *Suprabhát*, started and long conducted by two lady graduates, Srímatís Kumudiní Basu and Básantí Chakravartí.*

* Three recent movements for the education of women and the amelioration of their condition, all initiated by Bráhmas, deserve to be mentioned,—(1) The Nárí Sikshá Samiti, with numerous schools under it, (2) The Vání Bhavan, a training school for widows, both under the management of Lady J. C. Bose, and (3) the Sarojnaliní Industrial School with branch schools and associations, started by Mr. G. S. Datta. The Gokhale Memorial School, ably managed by Mrs. P. K. Ray, may also be reckoned as practically a Brâhma institution.

From this rapid sketch, which I close here, it will be seen what a remarkable part the Bráhma Samáj has taken in the education of women. In fact it has been the chief factor during the last half-a-century and more in the progress of Indian women; and it is decidedly the foremost of all Indian communities in social progress, excepting perhaps the Native Christian community. I shall now say a few words,—and these shall be my last in this lecture and in this series of lectures,—on the other side of female progress, that called female emancipation. I have no objection to the word 'emancipation' as applied to our women, as some, who do not quite see the points at issue, seem to have. I believe that Indian women are under a thraldom at least as real and abject (if not more) as our political subjection to the British, and that the one as urgently calls for remedial measures as the other. Our love for our mothers, sisters and wives often effectively hides from us the reality of their social slavery to us, just as the benevolent tendency of British rule for several generations long hid from our view, and still hides from many eyes, the reality of our political slavery. It is sad to contemplate that the Bráhma Samáj has done so little to break the fetters which bind women, though by promoting their education it has, no doubt, laid the foundation of future progress in this matter. The Sádháran Bráhma Samáj has also proved its faithfulness to one of the fundamental principles of Bráhmaism—'*Nara nárí sádháraner samán adhikár.*'—

men and women have all equal rights—by laying open all its high offices, including that of ministers, to women. But the wave of social reaction which has been passing over the country for over a quarter of a century, has, to some extent, affected the Bráhma Samáj and crippled its reforming activity. I know of several families which were, some years back, in the forefront of social reform, but from which no reform, worthy of them, can any more be expected. That this is the effect more of the benumbing influence of the social atmosphere around and of the loss of spiritual vitality, than of any reasoned scheme of social conservatism, appears from the fact that when reform and progress are advocated and proposed by bolder spirits, they are not actively opposed except by the most thoughtless. I have no doubt therefore that this wave of reaction will pass away if a few earnest minds set forth the doctrine in the proper way, that the freedom of women follows logically from the essential principles of Bráhmaism and show the way to practical reforms in their own families. I do not think that anyone who is earnest about Bráhmaism can be anything but earnest about female liberty, if he sees the connection of the two. If one nation has no right to enslave another, if one man has no right to enslave another man, neither has the male kind any natural right to keep the female kind under perpetual bondage. It is indeed open to some people to argue that so far as their imaginations go, the time will never come when women, however

educated, will be fit for complete liberty; just as British Imperialists, even of the radical camp, argue that Indians, so far as their prophetic eyes go, must always be under personal Government. But such arguments are evidently vitiated by as palpable a bias in the one case as in the other. It is the bias of organised selfishness in both the cases and of an additional moral cowardice in the former. To earnest, unbiassed people, it must be evident that women, equally with men, have the right of free, that is liberal, all-round education, free movement and free livelihood. But practically we, Bráhmas, have up to this time recognised only the first of these three rights of women, and that also very imperfectly. What a small proportion of our women get a really liberal education! In even the wealthiest of our homes, such as can afford to give the highest education to their young members, what a sad contrast is to be seen between the boys and the girls?—the former receiving the highest education that the Indian and the English universities can give, and the girls married away before they have scarcely gone up to the secondary standard! With regard to free movement, it would not be too much to say that we have not gone more than one step in advance of orthodox Hindu society. Over fifty years ago, the right of women sitting outside the *pardá* in the Brahma Mandir of India was wrung from Kesav by the then advanced party in his church. In the *Mandir* and other meeting places of the Sádharan Bráhma Samáj this right has been recog-

nised without a question from the very beginning. But have we, as a community, gone a step farther than this in allowing free movement to our women during the last four decades and more? It is strange that even the orthodox Hindu women of Bombay and Madras are freer in this respect than the most enlightened of Bengali Bráhmikás. We see daily the health of our women breaking down under the strain of domestic duties and the harder strain of higher studies, and yet we do not afford them the facilities of free exercise in the open air. Then, how many opportunities there are, at the present moment, open to our young people, in the shape of public meetings, for improving their minds and widening their sympathies! Our young men freely avail themselves of these; but our young women are mostly shut out from these, because they are not allowed the liberty of walking to them, and are thus left decidedly behind their brethren in practical experience and usefulness. That one or two families here and there avail themselves of the liberty of free movement allowed them by the heads of their families, is only an exception which proves the rule of female seclusion prevailing amongst us,—a seclusion almost as perfect as that of orthodox Hindu women. As to what is usually said about the country's unpreparedness for behaving in a civil way with women moving about freely, I am aware that there are places where such free movement, even under proper escort, is not safe. But from long personal experience, I know that

in cities like Calcutta a gentlewoman runs no risk of unsafety by walking on the public thorougfares in the company of a male friend or relative. And when the larger cities get accustomed to such free movement on the part of our ladies, the small towns and villages will no doubt soon learn to respect it. In fact, the villages are, in this matter, better off than the cities. However, as to the third form of female liberty mentioned by me, that of free livelihood, it seems to me almost strange that we are doing nothing to effect a reform which is becoming a pressing one year after year. Numbers of unmarried women and widows among us are continually being thrown upon the shoulders of over-worked and struggling male relatives; and yet we are doing nothing to find out means of independent livelihood for our unemployed womankind. By our own efforts as well as through other agencies, the old systems of forced non-consentuous marriages and joint families are breaking down about us; and yet we are doing nothing to meet the wants which this social revolution is creating. That our women are slowly taking to teachership and the medical profession, is not a proper solution of the difficulty. How many women could these departments provide for even if they were more largely entered into by our ladies than they actually are? It therefore behoves the more thoughtful members of the Bráhma Samáj to give up their apathy and inactivity in regard to this matter and devise a scheme of free livelihood for our women, both in the interest of

their true spiritual progress and of their temporal comfort and happiness.

I now come to the close of the series of lectures I began in April last year. I take this opportunity of repeating my thanks to the members of the Theological Society for having elected me lecturer and given me this opportunity of re-thinking the grounds and principles of Bráhmaism and presenting to you the results of my reflections. I embrace also this opportunity of expressing publicly my grateful feelings and, I trust, of everyone of you, to the Mahárájádhiráj of Burdwan, whose pious and enlightened interest in Theology made the foundation of this lectureship possible. It now remains for me, before I sit down, to indicate, in as few words as I can, the ground I have travelled in the course of the twelve lectures I have delivered here on the Philosophy of Bráhmaism. You will see, from my recitation of the subjects dealt with in these lectures, that the series might as well be called the "History and Philosophy of Bráhmaism." In my first lecture I gave you a history of the development of Bráhmic doctrines from the time of Rájá Rámmohan Ráy to quite recent times, touching briefly on all the chief phases of thought which have arisen during this important period of the history of Bráhmaism. In my second lecture I set forth the claims of free scientific thought as the true basis of Bráhmaism and exposed the errors of supernaturalism in both its gross and subtle forms. In my third lecture I gave a critical exposition of the doctrine of Intuition

taught by Maharshi Devendranáth Thákur and Brahmánanda Kesavchandra Sen, and pointed out both the permanent essence and the passing forms of that doctrine. In my fourth lecture, which, you must have seen, is the corner stone of the whole system laid down in these lectures, I showed, by an analysis of knowledge and thought, how the reality of an infinite and eternal Consciousness as the very life and support of finite intelligence and of Nature, lies at the root of all forms of conscious life. In the fifth lecture I showed that the fundamental principles of all sciences,—physical, biological and mental,—are metaphysical, whether scientists themselves know this or not, and imply the existence of an intelligent Being at the root of Nature. In the sixth lecture I showed the place of both Monism and Dualism in philosophical Bráhmaism. In my seventh lecture I expounded the idea of self-realisation, which I regard as the true basis of ethics, and laid down the main lines of moral duties. In my eighth lecture I sought to establish the truth of the Divine love and perfection on the basis of the doctrine of conscience expounded in my previous lecture. In my ninth lecture I set forth the arguments for the immortality of the soul, dwelling at some length on the latest forms of Materialism, as ably dealt with by the eminent American Psychologist, Professor W. James. In my tenth lecture I treated, both historically and critically, of the various systems of spiritual culture which have been taught by Bráhma ministers and

writers on practical religion from the time of Rájá Rámmohan Ráy to the present day. In my eleventh lecture I stated at some length the chief Bráhma arguments against idolatry and caste and tried to meet the objections which are usually raised by Theists still in orthodox Hindu society against the existence of the Bráhma Samāj as a distinct social organisation. In this my last lecture, I have given, as you have seen, a brief history of marriage reform in the Bráhma Samáj with a statement of the advantages offered by Bráhma marriages over orthodox forms of marriage, and have also told you what the Bráhma Samáj has done up to this time and ought to do in future for promoting the education and emancipation of women. I close with the hope that my humble labours in the cause of Bráhma Theology will be rewarded by your seriously reflecting on the subjects I have set forth before you. May God be ever with us all in our search after truth!

Om Śántih Śántih Śántih, Harih Om.

APPENDIX

I am afraid that the statement and exposition of metaphysical principles in the fourth lecture will be felt by some readers to be too brief. It will perhaps seem specially so to those who have been led by their study of works on Philosophy to conclusions different from those stated in it. Those whose acquaintance with Philosophy is confined to the current manuals of Psychology, will perhaps find my statements particularly confusing. For readers of these classes I shall, in this note, go into a somewhat closer analysis of perception than I have done in the text, and shall also name and consider some anti-theistic theories,—a course which I have carefully avoided in the lecture. It will be found that the criticism I offer, in this note, of these theories is given in substance in the text. But a detailed criticism involving a statement of these theories, may perhaps be more helpful to some readers.

The reader may have heard of the doctrine that we cannot perceive anything unless it touches our body and affects our senses. To those who have had nothing to do with Psychology or Philosophy, it does not seem to be so. To them it seems that we do perceive things not in contact with our senses, even things lying at a great distance from them. But the fact is that the doctrine referred to is substantially true; and as an apprehension of its truth is likely to facilitate the understanding of the main ideas

dealt with in the lecture, I shall offer here a brief explanation of it. The reader will see that the coldness, smoothness and hardness of the table before me,—and let us suppose before him,—are nothing to us before we feel them by actually touching it. And as we feel them, they are what we call tactual sensations, affections of our sensibility. It will also be clear that the smell of a rose is nothing to us before we actually smell it, before particles of the rose-pollen are in direct contact with our olfactory nerves, and that smell as felt is nothing but a sensation, a sensuous feeling. In the same manner, the sweetness of sugar is perceived only when the object comes into actual contact with our tongue, and as felt in this manner, it is but a sensation, a modification of our sensibility. All this is easy to understand , but that the colour of the table is also a sensation and felt only when the object seen is in direct contact with the nerves of the eyes, will present difficulties to the ordinary reader. It seems as if we directly perceive colour as in an object more or less distant from the body. But really it is not so. Before we perceive colour in an object, the rays of light falling upon it must be reflected on our eyes and form an image on the retina. What we feel as colour is the sensation which follows upon the formation of this image. It is as much due to the contact of light with the visual nerves as the tactual sensations are due to the other varieties of sensuous impact. But what of the distance—the distance of the table, for instance, from my eyes? Is not this distance—distance in the line of sight—directly perceived? The reader will see, on somewhat close observation, that a knowledge of this distance is acquired, not by direct perception, but by inference, and that this in-

ferential knowledge has become so habitual to us that it seems like direct perception. If he holds a pencil horizontally before his eyes, he will note that he can see only one end of it, the one immediately close to his eyes, and not the other end. If distance in the line of sight were directly perceptible, the whole length of the pencil, including the other end, would be seen. As it is not seen, it is proved that distance in the line of sight is not perceptible. It is a straight line of which you see only one end, namely the end in immediate contact with your eyes. What, then, you seem to see as colour in a distant object, is really in an object in direct contact with your body—in your eyes rather, as much as smell is in your nose and taste in your tongue. That what we directly see is only an image in our eyes, or rather two images coalescing into one, will be clear from the fact that when we, by pressing a finger on one of our eyelids, move our eyeballs and disturb the parallelism of the eyes, the two images on our eyes become distinct, and the image seen by the moving eye moves with its movements. If both the eyeballs are moved, both the images move and thus show that they are within and not without the eyes. That there is a distant object, that the colour in your eyes is caused by a reflecting object lying at a distance, is, as I have already said, an inference arrived at from various circumstances. This inferential knowledge is only slowly acquired, as psychologists will tell you. It has been found that when the eyes of people born with defective eyes, eyes long unused, have been opened, all things seem to these people as touching their eyes; and it is from the fact that in order to touch the things they see,—the objects

from which comes the light they see,—they have to move to greater or less distances, and from other circumstances of a similar nature, that they come to learn the distances of these objects. The faintness of colour presented by distant objects, their diminished size, and such other facts have now become to us signs telling us with more or less immediacy that such objects are at a distance from us. These remarks hold good of sound also, which, as we feel it, is a sensation due to the contact of the vibrations of air with the nerves of the ear, but which has gradually become a sign of objects more or less distant from us.

Now, does it follow from what I have said above that in perception we know only sensations, the passing modifications of our sensibility? Far from it. It will be clear, on close observation, that with every sensation we perceive our organism as an extended object. In experiencing tastes, smells, sounds, colours and the various tactual sensations, the various organs affected—the tongue, the nose, the ears, the eyes and the skin—are perceived as extended objects. The body or organism is the object of direct perception; but through it we know the world in space. The body is known as occupying a part of space, and space is known as unlimited. Objects lying outside the body are known through their contact with the various senses. For instance, the table before me is known through the visual, tactual and other sensations it produces in me. From the sensation of colour which it produces in me, I know it as a coloured object, that is, an object having the power or quality of reflecting light. Through the sensations which it produces in me when I touch it and press my hand upon it, I know it as

a hard resisting substance, and so on. The steps and processes through which we acquire the knowledge of what we call external objects are matters of Psychology and cannot be dealt with here in detail; but as the reader must have seen in reading the fifth lecture, metaphysical theories are sometimes mixed up with the subject matter of Psychology—theories which Theology cannot overlook. Let us here come face to face with some of these theories. The question which concerns us most is the nature of the objects known through perception,—their relation to the knowing mind. The ordinary unphilosophical view is that the objects perceived by us exist outside the perceiving mind and are yet endowed with qualities which are called sensations in philosophical language. People living without reflection think that colours, sounds, tastes, touches and smells exist in extra-mental objects, just as we experience these sensations. That this view involves a self-contradiction will be admitted by everyone who has any conception of the meaning of 'sensations'. Sensations or sensuous feelings can exist only in a sentient or feeling mind; they cannot exist in objects conceived as extra-mental. The philosophical theory nearest to this unphilosophical view is what is called Dualism or Realism. In this theory objects perceived are supposed to be extra-mental realities endowed with qualities not like, but corresponding to, the sensations which they produce in us. For instance, the brown colour of the table before me is indeed, on its subjective side, a sensation in my mind, but as in the object, it is an extra-mental quality. The hardness of the table is, on the mental side, a sensation in me, and on the objective side, a certain extra-mental quality which produces this sensation. It will be seen, if the reader thinks upon

it, that this theory only partially avoids the self-contradiction which vitiates the popular view. If colours, sounds, tastes, touches and smells, as in objects, as out of the mind, are entirely different from colours, sounds, tastes, touches and smells as we experience them, is there any reason for calling the former by the same names as the latter? The ethereal vibration which is supposed to produce in us the sensation of colour, is unseen; and if it is to be called colour, it should be called unseen colour, which is nothing better than a contradiction. Nor is the supposed quality in the table which absorbs all other colours and presents only brown to our eyes, anything that is or can ever be seen; and yet it receives the names 'colour' and 'brown' in the theory in question. In fact the 'qualities' of the Dualistic theory are entirely unknown in themselves, by its own admission, and are only supposed *causes* of sensation. A cause, it seems, can be a cause without explaining its supposed effects; for, whereas sensations are known, what are supposod to be their causes are quite unknown. Explanation, it seems, consists in referring the known to the unknown, and in referring what is mental to something conceived as extra-mental. That the extra-mental cannot be conceived, that we never conceive it, though we often seem to do so, we have seen in the text. And even if it could be conceived, it could not in any sense explain things mental. What is in the mind, in consciousness, can be explained by the mind alone.

As may be seen without much difficulty, philosophical Dualism or Realism could not but lead to Agnosticism; and in the philosophy of Herbert Spencer it has necessarily led to a system in which everything known is sought to be explained by referring it to an Unknown and Unknowable.

Mr. Spencer calls his system 'Transfigured Realism' and expounds it at great length in part VII (Vol. II) of his *Principles of Psychology*. He admits fully that the world, as we know it, is a mental picture, existing in the mind and constructed out of materials wholly mental. So far he rejects Dualism or Natural Realism in both the popular and the philosophical form. His Dualism or Realism consists in tracing this mentally-constructed world to the action of a Reality which, in his system, takes the place of matter in ordinary philosophical Dualism, differing from matter, however, in being ultimately the source or origin of the mind itself and not merely of its passing phenomena. Of the Ultimate Reality which causes our sensations and is the source of what we call our minds, we know nothing, says Mr. Spencer, beyond its bare existence. In what sense, then, is it the cause of our sensations, and how do we know that it is such a cause? Whence do we derive our idea of causality and how far are we right in conceiving the Ultimate Reality as a cause in our sense of the term? In answering questions like these, Mr. Spencer's Agnosticism is greatly modified and his Unknowable renounces a large part of its unknowableness or becomes a pure fiction. Mr. Spencer thinks that it is in our experience of the resistance which objects offer to us that we come into direct contact with extra-mental reality and know the real objectivity of objects—their existence independently of mind. Thus, in pressing my hand against the table before me, I become aware that my power, that which causes the pressure I put forth, is opposed by another power essentially similar in nature to mine. Mr. Spencer admits that our idea of causality or origination is derived from our own activity, the voluntary putting forth of energy

on our part, and that we necessarily conceive objective reality in terms of the subjective. But he avoids the Theism which necessarily follows from such an admission by a curious form of scepticism—one, however, which is the inevitable result of the abstract way of thinking which characterises the school of thought he represents. The power in us, he says, is endowed with consciousness and purpose; but we have no right to think that the power without us is so endowed, it may very well be without these qualities; and Mr. Spencer elsewhere tries to show that consciousness and purpose are finite attributes which cannot be ascribed to the Infinite. But what remains of power when consciousness and purpose are abstracted from it? Mr. Spencer evidently thinks that power is something even though unendowed with consciousness and purpose, and that power, as without us, is essentially similar to power as it is in us, only devoid of its consciousness and purpose? One cannot but wonder wherein the similarity consists. However, the viciousness of this abstract way of thinking is sufficiently shown in our fourth and fifth lectures, the latter specially dealing with our ideas of causality and power. What now specially invites our attention is the reasonableness or the reverse of Mr. Spencer's contention that our experience of resistance constitutes a proof of Dualism, of the existence of a reality other than consciousness. Let us consider the matter somewhat closely.

It will be seen that the seeming proof of Dualism lies in a misinterpretation of externality,—that the externality of one object to another in space is wrongly explained by it as the externality of something called 'force' or 'power' to consciousness. The table before me is indeed external

to my body, occupying a portion of space different from that which my body occupies. We have seen in the text that the externality of the parts of space implies the non-externality, the unspatiality, of the consciousness of which they are objects. Two portions of space which are external to each other are both included in the consciousness which knows them. Thus the table and my body are both included in the consciousness—what I call my own consciousness—to which they appear. What I call their qualities are objects of this consciousness. If I conceive them as permanent powers, not as merely passing sensations,—as we all do, for we believe the world to be a permanent reality,—I still think of them as objects of consciousness, as permanent ideas in the mind, which I conceive as both subjective and objective, —in my body and in what I call external objects. Is there really any one among these qualities which forms an exception, which either stands out of the mind or speaks of an extra-mental reality? Is hardness or resistance such a quality? How so? As a sensation, it is just like other sensations, implying a mind which experiences it. If it is a permanent power causing sensations, so are other qualities too. A permanent power to cause sensations means nothing more than a permanent capability or potentiality of the mind to experience sensations—to manifest itself as the subject of sensations. If this implies activity, as it really does, this activity cannot belong to anything else,—if the existence of anything else were at all conceivable.—than the mind itself. As the mind, by its own activity, manifests itself as the subject of sensations like colour, sound, smell and taste, so does it, by its own inherent activity, manifest itself as experiencing what we call hardness, resistance

or weight. As little in the latter as in the former cases do we come into contact with a reality alien to the mind. What distinguishes our experience of resistance from other sensuous experiences is that it is accompanied by a volitional effort on our part, an effort which makes us aware of a fund of activity in us,—a power which we call our will. We are right in ascribing all actions, all events, to such a power; but we are wrong in imagining a mind, consciousness or some inconceivable reality, other than what we call our consciousness, as the source of all events not accompanied by our volitions. Volitions come out of the same source from which involuntary phenomena like colours and sounds arise. All phenomena, voluntary and involuntary alike, require a consciousness, a permanent and active consciousness, as their ultimate explanation. To say that volitions arise from within and sensations from without,—the former from a reality which is here, and the latter from one which is there,—is to transfer relations of space to a region transcending space, a region in which space relations themselves find their ultimate explanation. It is the region of one indivisible Consciousness to which all objects or phenomena are related in indissoluble unity. In that region the individual can indeed be distinguished from the Universal, the finite from the Infinite, as I have shown in the text; but it is only a distinction and not a division, a difference in, and not out of, unity. It is very different, as the reader must have seen, from the Spencerian scheme of one unknown reality, which we call our mind, coming somehow or other into contact with an alien reality, equally or more unknown, and receiving sensations and ideas from it, somewhat in the same manner as a piece of wax receives impressions from a

seal pressing upon it. The philosophy of the Unknowable will be found, when the reader understands it, to be nothing better than a figure of speech wrongly used.

It will be seen that in the system explained in the text, one which, under many varieties, is called Absolute Idealism in western Philosophy, but which we, Indians, may call by the simpler name of *Brahmavád* or *Bráhmaism*, as it centres in Brahman, the Absolute Spirit, not a jot or tittle is taken away from the reality of what are called material objects. Their existence in space, their permanence as substances, and their variety remain as they are in popular or philosophical Dualism. It is only their supposed independence that is transferred to the Supreme Spirit, in necessary relation to which they are shown to exist. The so called qualities of matter cease to be, in this system, abstract qualities or powers of an unconscious or unknown and unknowable Reality, and become powers of a living Mind. To the eye of reason, faith, or spiritual vision, by whatever name we may call the highest stage of knowledge, even what is called the material world, the world of space and time, of colours, sounds, tastes, smells and touches, of the objects of everyday use which surround us, is spiritualised and becomes the living presence of God as much as the world of lofty ethical ideas, of love and holiness, of the communion of saints and so on.

The world of time and change, the relation of change to the Eternal Spirit, has, I feel, received very inadequate treatment in the text. It must be evident to the careful reader of these lectures that according to the system set forth in them, every change is to be interpreted as the appearance of a Divine idea to the individual soul, or the

disappearance of one from it. As an idea is inseparable from a mind or person, being an abstraction which finds concrete reality in the latter, the ultimate interpretation of change is either the self-manifestation of the Infinite Spirit to the finite, or its self-concealment from the latter. This interpretation of change presents no difficulty so far as changes in the individual consciousness are concerned. But it offers a difficulty which seems all but insuperable when we have to deal with cosmic changes. If all changes are changes of consciousness, Nature must consist either of innumerable cosmic souls higher than man, but lower than the Supreme Soul, or of a single cosmic soul co-eternal with, but subordinate to, the Supreme Spirit. It is this conception which appears in the Vedánta Philosophy as Brahmá, Apara-Brahman or Hiranyagarbha, and in Christian Philosophy as the Logos or co-eternal Son of God. As I have discussed the subject at some length in the third lecture of my *Vedánta and its Relation to Modern Thought*, I content myself with only a brief notice of it here. I cannot say that I am fully satisfied with the conclusions stated there, but I need hardly state that it seems to me far more satisfactory than the explanation offered either by ordinary Realism or by Agnosticism. According to the former, changes in Nature are the action of blind forces on dead matter; and according to the latter, that of the Unknowable on itself. Both the theories use conceptions which a true philosophy, looking facts in the face, shows to be nothing but abstractions having no place in a concrete world of reality.

Note.—When the present writer began his philosophical studies, Mill and Spencer were the most prominent of anti-theistic thinkers in England and their influence

was very largely felt in the thinking circles of English-educated Indians. When these lectures were written and delivered, that influence, specially that of Spencer, though waning, was still considerable. This is why, in writing the metaphysical portions of this book, Spencer and those whom he criticised were specially kept in view. Bráhmaism, as a system of Theism, must take notice of prominent anti-theistic systems. New schools of thought have since arisen in England and the revival of Vedantism and Vaishnavism in this country, already proceeding then, has gained new force during the last two decades. Owing to the latter fact, English schools of thought now engage far less attention in this country than they used to do before. The most prominent of the new schools, Pluralism or Personal Idealism, has been briefly dealt with in a supplementary chapter of the English version of my *Brahmajijnásá*. Other recent books by me,—*Krishna and the Gitá*, *The Theism of the Upanishads* and *Krishna and the Puranas*—deal with revived Máyávad and Neo-Vaishnavism. A series of articles in the *Indian Messenger* on recent British Idealism and another series on the philosophies of Yájnavalkya, Indra and Prajápati—both of which series are intended for publication in a book form—have the same object in view,—the exposition of recent views on philosophical religion and the study of old systems from the stand-point of modern thought. I state these facts as an apology for the brevity of this appendix,—for not making it much larger than it was in the first edition of the book.

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সাধনবিন্দু—ধর্ম্মসাধনবিষয়ক প্রবন্ধাবলী। * মূল্য চারি আনা।

ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্ম-শিক্ষা—বালক-বালিকার উপযোগী। সাধারণ ব্রাহ্মসমাজ কার্য্যালয়। মূল্য চারি আনা।

ব্রাহ্মসমাজের আধ্যাত্মিক ইতিবৃত্ত। সাধারণ ব্রাহ্মসমাজ কার্য্যালয়। মূল্য দুই আনা।

চিন্তাকণিকা—ঈশ্বরের অস্তিত্ব ও স্বরূপ-বিষয়ক প্রবন্ধ। সাধারণ ব্রহ্মসমাজ কার্য্যালয়। মূল্য এক আনা।

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* Out of print at present.

Opinions

Gleams of the New Light, Roots of Faith, and Whispers from the Inner Life

স্বর্গীয় মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর—*'Gleams of the New Light'* [নামে] যে পুস্তিকা রচনা করিয়াছ তাহা এ সময়ের উপযুক্ত হইয়াছে এবং তাহাতে ব্রাহ্মসমাজের অনেক অভাব পূরণ হইবে। ইহার আলোকে অনেক সুশিক্ষিত যুবকের চক্ষু খুলিয়া যাইবে এবং হৃদয়ে ঈশ্বরপ্রেম ও সদ্ভাবের সঞ্চার হইবে। ...এই গ্রন্থের মধ্যে যে সকল নিগূঢ় ভাব আছে, তাহা সুস্পষ্ট ব্যক্ত হইয়াছে এবং তাহা সহজেই সকলের বোধগম্য হইবে। এই গ্রন্থের উপরে ঈশ্বরের প্রসাদ অবতীর্ণ হউক্।

'Whispers from the Inner Life' প্রভৃতি যে কয়েক খানা পুস্তক আমাকে উপহার দিয়াছিলে তাহা আমি অতি আদরের সহিত গ্রহণ করিয়াছি। তুমি অন্তরতর জীবনের যে গূঢ়তর সংবাদ প্রেমরাজ্য হইতে আনিয়া এই অধঃস্থ পৃথিবীতে দিয়াছ, ইহা সরস্বতীর দৈববাণী, ইহা সত্যের আলোক—যার চক্ষুতে এই আলোক পড়িবে, তাহার মনের আর অন্ধকার থাকিবে না। ইহার প্রতি কথা আমার আত্মাকে আকৃষ্ট করিয়াছে, কোন কোন স্থানে আমার শরীর পুলকে রোমাঞ্চিত হইয়াছে।

The Late Babu Rajnarain Bose—I have much pleasure in saying that you have evinced remarkable ability in handling the very important subjects treated of in them (the first series of essays). This collection will be highly acceptable to all right-minded Theists. Your lucidity of exposition does great credit to you.

The (*London*) *Spectator.*—These two pamphlets (the first two) contain essays implying a great deal of lucid thought and study, by a man of no small power. The former presents us with a compendious defence of a species of theological idealism, and the latter with the application of this idealism to the spiritual life. The metaphysical pamphlet shows that Mr. Datta's avowed study of Dr. Martineau has been thorough, and not without great influence on his own mind. The pamphlet containing short spiritual essays is, however, to our mind, the more original, though not perhaps the abler of the two. The two essays on "Why cant we love God ?" for instance, are both simple and telling, and read very like the counsels of some of the Catholic saints. Still more is this the case with the little essay called "An Aid to Communion."